CHAPTER ONE - PURPOSE AND NEED

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The Upper Snake River District (hereafter referred to as the District) of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), comprising the Burley, Idaho Falls, Pocatello, and Shoshone Field Offices, administers almost 5.4 million acres of lands in south-central and eastern Idaho (Figure 1-1). The District encompasses 23 southern Idaho counties: Bannock, Bear Lake, Bingham, Blaine, Bonneville, Butte, Camas, Caribou, Cassia, Clark, Elmore, Franklin, Fremont, Gooding, Jefferson, Jerome, Lincoln, Madison, Minidoka, Oneida, Power, Teton, and Twin Falls. Major communities in the planning area include Burley, Idaho Falls, Pocatello, Shoshone, Sun Valley, and Twin Falls. Four BLM field offices—at Burley, Idaho Falls, Pocatello, and Shoshone—manage numerous parcels of public land that range in size from less than 40 acres to more than 100,000 acres (Figure 1-2 and Table 1-1).

BLM-administered lands under jurisdiction of the District are adjacent to National Forest System (NFS) lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), State of Idaho lands, the Fort Hall Indian Reservation, the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve, the City of Rocks, and the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL; a U.S. Department of Energy, Idaho Operations Office [DOE-ID] facility). Also within the boundaries of the District are private lands in and around the many urban and rural communities.

TABLE 1-1. ACREAGES OF LAND UNDER LAND STATUS JURISDICTIONS WITHIN THE DISTRICT

Land Status	Acres	Percentage
BLM	5,398,170	27.0
U.S. Forest Service	4,084,000	21.0
National Park Service	499,512	3.0
Dept of Energy/INEEL	568,000	3.0
Fort Hall Indian Reservation	521,000	3.0
State of Idaho	899,000	5.0
Military	4,500	< 0.1
Water	197,000	1.0
Private	7,716,000	39.0
Total	**19,877,182**	**100**

In response to the nationwide increase in wildland fires, fire starts, and fatalities, the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (USDI and USDA 1995) was revised in 2001 (USDI et al. 2001). Currently, all federal land-management agencies are implementing or preparing to implement the National Fire Plan, which is the means by which the Federal Wildland Fire

Management Policy is applied. The amendment to land use plans (LUPs) implements the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy.

Prior to modern fire suppression, wildland fire had consistently been an integral part of the District's ecosystem, as demonstrated by historical ecological evidence. To withstand this threat, numerous vegetation species and cover types in the District have developed various responses that have enabled them to resist, tolerate or take advantage of fire.

At present, many of the cover types within the District have been subjected to wildland fire that is not within the historical range of variability. Large and/or severe fires in these cover types can threaten people and property as well as the resiliency, integrity, and long-term sustainability of ecosystem components and processes. Fires are occurring more frequently and are burning more severely in some cover types. For example, the invasion of the sagebrush steppe cover type by annual grasses such as cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*) and medusahead rye (*Taeniatherum caputmedusae*) has substantially increased fine fuel continuity in this cover type, making it more susceptible to large, frequent, and severe fires. In other vegetation cover types, fires are occurring less frequently than they have historically, which causes undesirable changes in vegetation species composition and structure and an accumulation of hazardous fuels. For example, because of long-term fire suppression, juniper species are expanding their range at the expense of sagebrush steppe, and Dry Conifer cover types are slowly replacing aspen and some Mountain Shrub cover types.

Since approximately 1996, wildland fires have occurred in the District at an overall accelerated rate (Figure 1-3), mostly due to vegetation changes and changed conditions like cheatgrass invasion into sagebrush steppe cover types. To a lesser extent, the District has experienced decreases in fire frequency and attendant increases in fire severity in its aspen, Dry Conifer, and Mountain Shrub cover types. These vegetation cover types require more frequent disturbance to decrease fuel loads, facilitate aspen and forb regeneration, and decrease fire intensity. It has become clear that hazardous fuels need to be managed. Altered fire regimes (i.e., changes in fire frequency, severity, and size) not only threaten resources such as wildlife habitat, cultural resources, air/visual quality, and grazing, but also affect public and firefighter safety within and around areas of human development.

1.2 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

1.2.1 PURPOSE

The purpose for action is to move toward resource conditions that minimize risk to human life and property and allow for efficient and effective wildland fire suppression efforts; to integrate fire's natural role into resource management decisions; and to maintain or restore vegetation that is resistant to catastrophic wildland fire, will support special status species of wildlife, and will provide for other productive uses.

The purpose of the proposed fire management plan amendments is to:

- Establish fire management guidance, objectives, policies, and management actions.

- Identify resource goals and methods, including desired future condition of the fire-related vegetation resources, and management actions necessary to achieve objectives.
- Form the basis to update FMPs and integrate them with allotment management plans, wildlife management plans, recreation management plans, Idaho Standards for Rangeland Health and Guidelines for Livestock Grazing, and other applicable plans, to the greatest extent possible.
- Provide LUP level direction to enable incremental steps toward a long-term resource goal of conditions that minimize risk to human life and property and maintain or restore vegetation that is resistant to catastrophic wildland fire.

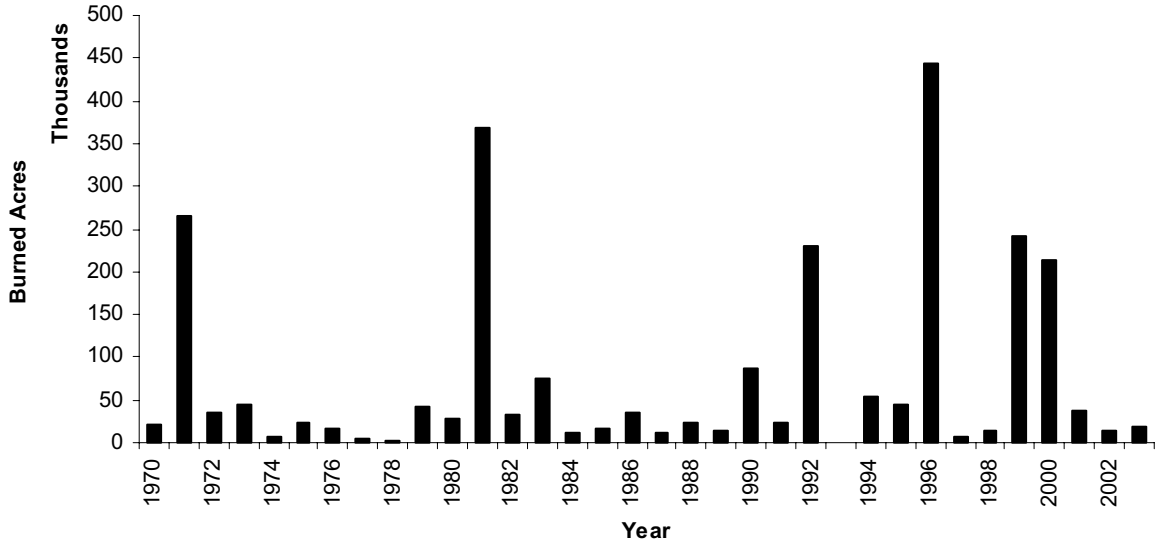

Figure 1-3. Wildland fire activity in the District, 1970 through 2003

1.2.2 NEED

Existing LUPs in the District, including management framework plans (MFPs) and resource management plans (RMPs) date from the 1970s and 1980s (Table 1-2). Thus, the fire management directions in these plans are not current with the National Fire Plan or the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (1995; reviewed and updated in 2001). Action is needed for the BLM to comply with the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy and to work towards resource conditions on BLM-administered lands that allow productive use of those lands and enhance the social and economic stability of the communities that depend on them.

Fire management direction in the current LUPs does not address fire management issues in a comprehensive way. This lack of LUP-level direction has created management challenges in recent years. Even though the need has been identified for increased use of prescribed fire for hazardous fuels reduction, none of the current LUPs actively promote the use of prescribed fires or recognize the importance of fire in natural ecosystems. The current LUPs do not

address the recent increase in wildland fires (occurrences and intensities) or the large number of acres burned over the past few years. Increased wildland fire activity in the District has seriously impacted the natural environment of the public lands and indirectly, public land users as well. Furthermore, recent concerns over potential listing of the sage grouse and other wildlife under the Endangered Species Act may be closely related to loss of habitat due to fire.

Amending the LUPs with comprehensive fire management direction is necessary to integrate fire management into the land use planning process. The BLM's planning process forms the basis for every on-the-ground action the BLM undertakes. The proposed plan amendments would also facilitate updates for the District's FMPs, which are to be prepared based on objectives in the LUPs. The proposed plan amendments would facilitate resource and fire management activities throughout the District, as well as set a new standard for integration of resource management and fire management activities at the field office and district levels. The proposed plan amendments will amend the LUPs listed in Table 1-2.

TABLE 1-2. LAND USE PLANS (LUPS) CURRENTLY DIRECTING RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN THE DISTRICT, WITH DATES OF IMPLEMENTATION.

Year, Land Use Plan	FO[1]	Year, Land Use Plan	FO
1975, Magic MFP[2]	SH	1982, Twin Falls MFP	BU
1976, Bennett Hills / Timmerman Hills MFP	SH	1983, Big Lost MFP	IF
1981, Big Desert MFP	IF	1985, Cassia RMP[3]	BU
1981, Little Lost-Birch Creek MFP	IF	1985, Medicine Lodge RMP	IF
1981, Malad MFP	PO	1985, Monument RMP	SH/BU
1981, Sun Valley MFP	SH	1988, Pocatello RMP	PO

[1] Field Offices (FO): BU = Burley, IF = Idaho Falls, SH = Shoshone, PO = Pocatello/Malad
[2] Management Framework Plan (MFP)
[3] Resource Management Plan (RMP)

The proposed fire management direction plan amendments respond to the following needs:

- Wildland fire is a necessary element in the development and maintenance of healthy ecosystems of the Interior Columbia Basin, Snake River Plain, and Great Basin. Fire management direction is needed to establish objectives on the role of fire in the ecosystem.
- Due to the past fire suppression efforts, fuel loads have increased to hazardous conditions. Fire management direction is needed to establish objectives to properly treat fuel loads with prescribed fire, as well as mechanical and chemical treatments.
- Wildlife management agencies and environmental groups are seriously concerned over the decline in sage grouse numbers in recent years. In some areas, invasive plant species are replacing natural sagebrush steppe communities. These trends have caused an increased demand for the protection of sagebrush steppe communities (i.e., sage grouse habitat). Fire management direction is needed to establish objectives to treat fuels and

properly utilize and/or suppress fire to improve degraded and protect existing sagebrush steppe communities.

- Aspen, Douglas fir, and juniper stands require management prescriptions that include prescribed fire to insure ecosystem health; but existing suppression policies have not accommodated this need. In some areas, extensive buildup of fuels and/or unnaturally dense woodland stands could lead to high intensity fires in the future that would lead to stand replacement. Fire management direction is needed to establish objectives to manage the role of fire in maintaining these resources.
- Better communication, coordination, cooperation, and training with local communities and rural fire departments could aid in reducing the threat from wildland fire in the Wildland Urban Interface, reduce arson, trespass and negligence occurrence, encourage fire prevention, and facilitate fire management throughout the District. Fire management direction is needed to provide appropriate objectives in the Wildland Urban Interface to reduce threats to communities-at-risk from wildland fire.

1.3 THE PROPOSED ACTION

In accordance with BLM planning policies, the following are basic elements of the Proposed Action that would compose the LUP-level plan regarding fire management direction as per BLM Instruction Memorandum 2004-007:

1. Landscape-level fire management goals and objectives, including desired wildland fire conditions.
2. The suite of management actions that can be used to meet desired, future conditions, including areas that are suitable for wildland fire use (WFU) for resource benefit and areas where WFU is not appropriate due to social, economic, political, or resource constraints.
3. Fire management priorities and treatment criteria.
4. Restrictions on fire management practices, if any are needed to protect natural or cultural values.

These elements of the Proposed Action are briefly summarized below. A complete description of Alternatives A (the No Action Alternative), B (the Proposed Action), C, and D (the Preferred Alternative) are described in Chapter 2, Descriptions of Alternatives.

1.3.1 LANDSCAPE-LEVEL FIRE MANAGEMENT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Landscape-level fire management goals and objectives are described for the 12 specific vegetation cover types identified in the District. These goals and objectives provide direction for the District to maintain or make progress towards Desired Future Conditions (DFC) for areas within the District, in which:

1. Wildland fire should occur less frequently and at a smaller scale.
2. Wildland fire should occur more frequently across the landscape.
3. Wildland fire should remain within the historical range of variability.

Ultimately, vegetation cover types would be maintained at or improved towards Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) 1. FRCC is an indicator of fire-related risk to key ecosystem components. A full description of FRCC is given in Section 3.2, Cohesive Strategy and Vegetation Resources (Issue 1).

1.3.2 SUITE OF MANAGEMENT ACTIONS THAT CAN BE USED TO MEET DESIRED FUTURE CONDITIONS (DFC)

Across the District, approximately 3,333,400 acres would be identified as suitable for WFU for resource benefit, and the remainder (approximately 2,066,500 acres) would be identified as not suitable/appropriate due to social, economic, political, or resource constraints (Figure 1-4). For analysis purposes, the following types and treatment levels of fire management activities would be needed over a 10-year period to meet desired resource conditions across the District (Table 1-3). Appendix A identifies the type and treatment level of fire management activities, by field office, to meet desired resource conditions.

TABLE 1-3. FIRE AND FUELS MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES (IN ACRES) PROPOSED BY ALTERNATIVE B – THE PROPOSED ACTION, OVER A 10-YEAR PERIOD.

Post-fire Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation[1]	Proactive Restoration[2]				
	WFU	RxFire[3]	Chemical	Mechanical	Seeding
129,905	112,200	356,000	426,000	64,300	620,900

Acre values are rounded to the nearest 100 acres.

[1] ES&R acres in this table only refer to those acres that would be revegetated and does not indicate wildland fire acres that would be protected (i.e., fenced) and allowed to recovery naturally.

[2] Proactive restoration typically would be performed as projects to reduce hazardous fuels.

[3] Prescribed Fire.

1.3.2.1 Wildland Fire

A wildland fire is an unplanned fire, either lightning- or human-caused, against which suppression actions are taken using an appropriate management response. Within the District, if a wildland fire exceeded initial attack capabilities, a management strategy (ranging from aggressive suppression to monitoring) would be chosen based on suppression cost and wildland fire-fighter safety to determine what equipment, personnel, and tactics should be used to suppress the fire.

1.3.2.2 Fire Vegetation Treatments

1.3.2.2.1 Wildland Fire Use (WFU)

WFU is a pre-planned vegetation treatment that involves taking advantage of a naturally-ignited wildland fire in an area where fire would benefit resources.

According to Alternative B – The Proposed Action, WFU would be conducted in specific areas of the District needing treatment after a site-specific plan and NEPA analysis are completed and only if predetermined prescriptive parameters (e.g., weather/fire behavior) can be met. Until this planning and NEPA analysis are accomplished, wildland fires would be suppressed using an appropriate management response.

1.3.2.2.2 Prescribed Fire Treatments (RxFire)

An RxFire is a pre-planned, management-ignited fire designed to meet specific resource objectives, such as reducing fuel loads, preparing a site for chemical treatment or seeding, or promoting vegetation regeneration. RxFires are useful for reducing fuel loads and providing or promoting vegetation regeneration.

In the District, RxFires can be performed anywhere that specific fire prescriptions can be met and fire risks to resources are mitigated after site-specific planning and NEPA analysis. RxFire would be used to reduce undesirable species and fire hazard in Low-elevation Shrub (especially areas dominated by cheatgrass, in preparation for chemical and seeding treatments), to reduce juniper encroachment on Mid-elevation Shrub, reduce conifer encroachment into decadent aspen stands, and rejuvenate decadent Mountain Shrub.

1.3.2.3 Non-fire Vegetation Treatments

1.3.2.3.1 Chemical

Chemical treatments involve application of herbicides to control invasive species/noxious weeds and/or unwanted vegetation. To meet resource objectives in the District, the preponderance of chemical treatments would be used in areas where cheatgrass or noxious weeds have invaded sagebrush steppe. In these areas, fine fuel loads are extremely high due to cheatgrass dominance of the understory. The effectiveness of chemical treatments increases if they are applied following RxFire or wildland fire.

1.3.2.3.2 Mechanical

Mechanical treatments include mowing, chaining, chopping, drill seeding, and cutting vegetation. To meet resource objectives within the District, the majority of mechanical treatments would occur in areas where fuel loads or invasive species need to be reduced prior to RxFire application; when fire risk to resources is too great to use WFU or RxFires; or where opportunities exist for biomass utilization or timber harvest. Examples include:

- Mountain Shrub areas adjacent to Wildland Urban Interface areas.
- Crucial wildlife habitat (e.g., sage grouse key habitat).
- Vegetation cover types in which burning would increase the likelihood of cheatgrass invasion (e.g., juniper encroachment into Mid-elevation Shrub).
- Juniper or Aspen/Conifer cover types in which the harvest or thinning of trees may be desirable.

1.3.2.3.3 Seeding

Seeding treatments include the application of grass, forb, or shrub seed, either aerially or from the ground. In areas of gentle terrain, ground applications of seed are often accomplished with a rangeland drill. Seeding allows the establishment of native species or placeholder species and restoration of disturbed areas to a perennial-dominated cover type, thereby decreasing the risk of subsequent invasion by cheatgrass or other exotic annual grasses.

Within the District, seeding would be used primarily as a follow-up treatment in areas where disturbance or the previously described treatments have removed exotic, annual grasses and their residue.

1.3.2.4 Post-fire Rehabilitation: Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&R)

Actions associated with ES&R are reactive and occur following a wildland fire:

- Emergency stabilization actions are implemented within one year of a fire. Their purpose is to stabilize and prevent unacceptable degradation of natural and cultural resources; to minimize threats to life or property resulting from the effects of fire; or to repair, replace, or construct physical improvements necessary to prevent degradation of land or resources.
- Rehabilitation actions are implemented within three years of a fire. Their purpose is to repair or improve affected lands unlikely to recover to a management-approved condition on their own, or to repair or replace minor facilities damaged by fire.

1.3.2.5 Restoration: Restoration Actions on BLM-administered Lands

Treatment actions that are not ES&R are referred to as restoration actions, which are proactive and occur before unplanned wildland fires. Restoration actions usually occur as hazardous fuels reduction treatments to meet management objectives and would consist of one or a combination of the following: RxFire, mechanical, chemical, or seeding treatments, identified above.

1.3.3 FIRE MANAGEMENT PRIORITIES AND TREATMENT CRITERIA

Alternative B – The Proposed Action ranks the following priorities for fire suppression and fuels treatment activities:

1. Protect communities-at-risk (Wildland Urban Interface areas) where public health and safety is a concern.
2. When multiple ignitions occur, use the following criteria for establishing suppression priorities:
    - Risks to sagebrush steppe.
    - Risks to Dry Conifer.

Criteria for establishing vegetation treatments are:

1. Sagebrush steppe protection/maintenance (e.g., prioritize treatment to areas that are adjacent to existing sagebrush cover types).
2. Sagebrush steppe restoration.
3. Aspen/Conifer, Mountain Shrub, and Dry Conifer restoration.
4. Areas that are at high risk of loss of key ecosystem components.

It is expected that activities would be conducted with the goal of accomplishing all of the above priorities. The criteria are to be followed when fire suppression resources or funding for projects are limited.

1.3.4 RESTRICTIONS ON FIRE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

To protect resource values, general restrictions on fire management practices would be applied to both fire suppression and fuels treatment projects. Alternative B – The Proposed Action, as detailed in Chapter 2, Descriptions of Alternatives, includes restrictions and guidelines that were developed to protect the following resources:

- Cultural Resources and Historic Trails
- Special Management Areas
- Riparian Areas
- Soils
- Water Quality
- Wildland Urban Interface
- Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive (TES) species
- Wildlife
- Native Vegetation
- Visual Resources
- Air Quality
- Hazardous Materials and Abandoned Mines Management

Restrictions and guidelines vary by location and are structured to allow the local manager the flexibility to apply them on a seasonal or annual basis, based on resource conditions, weather factors, and operational capability. Full descriptions of these restrictions and guidelines are given in Section 2.4.3.3, Fire Management Restrictions.

1.4 IDENTIFICATION OF RELEVANT ISSUES

Comments regarding issues surrounding this project were solicited from the public and federal, state, and local agencies and tribal governments. Additionally, management concerns were identified through discussions with BLM fire use specialists, field office managers, and resource specialists. Relevant issues were divided into two categories: (1) those that drove

the formulation of alternatives to the Proposed Action and (2) those that can be addressed within the general context of this EIS and were used to determine the level of analysis for each resource discipline. These issues are described in detail below.

Several issues were raised during scoping that were deemed outside the scope of this EIS analysis. These issues, along with a complete list of public concerns and issues identified during the scoping process can be found in the FMDA Content Analysis (BLM 2002a).

1.4.1 ISSUES DRIVING DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

During internal, public and agency scoping, two issues were identified that suggested a need for alternatives to the Proposed Action. These issues and the means of addressing them via alternatives are summarized below.

Issue 1: What effect would a treatment level higher than the Proposed Action (as described in the draft Cohesive Strategy and 10-year Comprehensive Strategy) have on the fuels and restoration needs of the Upper Snake River Plain ecosystem?

Alternative B – The Proposed Action does not incorporate the recommended level of treatment in the national-scale program option outlined in the draft Cohesive Strategy for Protecting People and Sustaining Natural Resources (USFS 2000) (hereafter, Cohesive Strategy). Additionally, Alternative B – The Proposed Action does not directly address the goals and priorities identified in both the Cohesive Strategy and the 10-year Comprehensive Strategy, (USFS 2000; USDI and USDA 2001). The goals of the Cohesive Strategy/10-year Comprehensive Strategy include:

- Improving fire prevention and suppression.
- Reducing hazardous fuels.
- Restoring fire-adapted ecosystems.
- Promoting community assistance.

The Cohesive Strategy, which was prepared by the USDA, projects the quantity and rate of fuels reduction treatments required on a landscape scale to restore altered fire regimes and protect communities from wildland fire. Central themes in the Cohesive Strategy/10-year Comprehensive Strategy include the return of fire to its "natural" role in the ecosystem, as well as an aggressive, collaborative approach for reducing wildland fire risk to cover types in fire-prone areas. The Cohesive Strategy estimates that fuels reduction treatments need to be increased fivefold to achieve these goals.

Issue 2: The types of treatments under the Proposed Action may negatively affect sage grouse habitat. What effect would different types or levels of treatment have on the sagebrush steppe ecosystem and sagebrush-obligate wildlife species?

This issue concerns the impact of treatment levels in Alternative B – The Proposed Action upon sagebrush and the subsequent impacts to sage grouse and other sagebrush-obligate wildlife species. Approximately 31 percent of the broad treatment levels in Alternative B –

The Proposed Action would occur in sagebrush, potentially affecting sage grouse habitat and populations.

1.4.2 ISSUES DRIVING THE ANALYSIS

This section summarizes the general issues that helped determine the pertinent resources and scope to be analyzed during the planning process.

- ***Water Quality, Watershed, Soils, and Riparian Resources:*** What would be the impacts on biological crusts, wind and water erosion?
- ***Vegetation:*** What would be the impacts on vegetation cover types and/or the spread of noxious and invasive weeds?
- ***Wildlife:*** What would be the impacts on sagebrush steppe wildlife species, as well as big game winter range and calving areas?
- ***Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive (TES) Species:*** What would be the impacts on terrestrial and aquatic TES species?
- ***Fire Management:*** How would each of the alternatives impact wildland fire risk to the Wildland Urban Interface, including people and property?
- ***Air Quality:*** What would be the short- and long-term impacts on air quality?
- ***Cultural Resources:*** What would be the impacts on significant cultural resources?

1.5 PLANNING CRITERIA AND LEGISLATIVE CONSTRAINTS

Planning criteria were prepared to ensure that decisions made are tailored to the issues pertinent to this planning effort and to avoid unnecessary data collection or analysis. The criteria identify the legal, policy, and regulatory constraints that direct or limit the BLM‘s ability to resolve issues; they also help guide the development of alternatives. The criteria were based on standards prescribed by applicable law and regulations; agency guidance; analysis of information pertinent to the District; results of coordination with the public, government agencies, and Native American Tribes; and professional judgment.

Preliminary planning criteria were developed for the following resources and uses and were provided to the public for comment during the public scoping period, which ended May 24, 2002.

- Air Quality
- Water Quality
- Livestock Grazing
- Watersheds, Soils, and Riparian Resources
- Vegetation
- Wildlife Habitat
- Special Status Plants and Animals
- Cultural Resources

- Native American Tribal Concerns and Treaty Rights
- Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) Interests
- Wildland Urban Interface Fire Management

The preliminary planning criteria were finalized and approved by the District Manager in September 2002. These criteria can be summarized as follows:

1. Comply with FLPMA and all other applicable federal and state laws.
2. Consult and coordinate with applicable federal, state, local agencies and tribal governments.
3. Recognize the Fort Bridger Treaty (1868) and preserve values significant to tribal members.
4. Protect federally listed threatened/endangered species and BLM sensitive species.
5. Incorporate applicable Biological Opinions, Conservation Agreements and Strategy Plans.
6. Incorporate applicable land health standards and best management practices.
7. Manage resources/uses for multiple use and sustained yield.

1.6 DECISIONS TO BE MADE

This EIS will provide sufficient analysis for the BLM Idaho State Director to decide:

- What fire management goals and objectives should be established at the landscape level for the LUPs in the District?
- What management actions should be used to meet DFC?
- What criteria should be used to establish fire management priorities?
- What restrictions are needed to protect natural and cultural values?

1.7 RELATIONSHIP OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO OTHER FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANNING EFFORTS

The proposed LUP amendments would be the foundation for updating District fire management plans (FMPs), fire management planning implementation documents, and on-the-ground actions and activities. The LUPs provide direction to the FMPs. This link between FMPs and LUPs is central to the Purpose and Need to amend the LUPs. In addition, guidance for developing FMPs is found in the Wildland and Prescribed Fire Management Policy Implementation Procedures Reference Guide (FSH 5108) and the Office of Fire and Aviation (OF&A) Fire Planning Instructional Memo (IM-2001-034).

1.7.1 FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANS (FMPS)

Prepared at the field office or District level, an FMP provides implementation information for a fire management program. It is a strategic document that defines a program to manage wildland fires based on the field office‘s or District‘s LUP. The FMP contains all relevant LUP management direction to guide planning, analysis, and implementation of on-the-

ground fire management actions and is updated annually to reflect changes in policy, LUP direction, and ground conditions, as well as other changes in the fire management program.

The proposed amendments to the District's LUPs and the FMP would offer direction for the application of fire and non-fire vegetation treatments. FMPs would be updated after the completion of the LUP amendments.

1.8 RELATIONSHIP OF THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO NON-FIRE MANAGEMENT PLANS AND EFFORTS

The proposed LUP amendments are interrelated with the following existing plans and ongoing efforts within the District.

1.8.1 POCATELLO LAND USE PLAN (LUP) REVISION

As previously discussed, Alternative B – The Proposed Action would result in amendments to existing District LUPs. The Pocatello RMP (1988) and the Malad MFP (1981) are scheduled to be revised in fiscal year (FY) 2006. Decisions resulting from this plan amendment would be incorporated into the Pocatello RMP revision effort.

1.8.2 THE CRATERS OF THE MOON NATIONAL MONUMENT AND PRESERVE

The National Park Service (NPS) and the BLM are currently preparing a joint general management plan (GMP) and RMP for Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve, which was created by Presidential Proclamation 7373 on November 9, 2000. This NPS/BLM planning area is located entirely within the administrative boundary of the District. Fire management planning decisions for Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve will be determined through the GMP/RMP planning process and will be finalized in the Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve GMP/RMP.

1.8.3 IDAHO NATIONAL ENGINEERING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY (INEEL)

The INEEL is located entirely within the administrative boundary of the District. The U.S. Department of Energy, Idaho Operations Office (DOE-ID) and the BLM both have management responsibilities within the INEEL boundaries, as identified in a 2003 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). While most INEEL activities are overseen by DOE-ID, certain responsibilities, such as grazing management, remain with the BLM. The INEEL has primary responsibility for suppressing wildland fires within its administrative boundaries, and BLM provides mutual aid for wildland fire response.

In April 2003, DOE-ID completed the Final Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory Wildland Fire Management Environmental Assessment. Currently, DOE-ID is preparing a management plan for the Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystem Reserve (SSER) within the INEEL boundary. DOE-ID is supportive of the BLM's fire management planning effort and agrees that describing the INEEL lands in this District planning document would be beneficial to the two agencies and interested publics.

As identified in the 2003 MOU, the District will consult with DOE-ID prior to making any final decisions regarding wildland fire suppression and control that might affect the INEEL.

1.8.4 INTERIOR COLUMBIA BASIN ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT PROJECT

The BLM is guided by a 2003 MOU to use information from the Interior Columbia Basin Strategy to amend and revise RMPs and project implementation on BLM-administered lands throughout the Interior Columbia Basin. The Interior Columbia Basin Strategy provides guidance for how to incorporate data and resource information developed by the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project (completed in December 2000). The strategy facilitates the utilization of the project, since a basin-scale Record of Decision (ROD) has been neither signed nor expected.

The Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project was used in the development of the Purpose and Need for the District-wide fire management project assessed in this EIS, particularly information relating to vegetation management to control cheatgrass invasion and maintain existing sagebrush steppe cover types in the District. The BLM will incorporate the science and data from the Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Project as part of the fire, fuels and related vegetation management direction.

1.8.5 TRIBAL TRUST RESPONSIBILITIES

The BLM is responsible for maintaining a formal government-to-government relationship with federally recognized Tribes. The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and Shoshone-Paiute Tribes have rights to and cultural/historical affiliation with lands in the District. The relationship between the federal government and the Tribes focuses on ensuring that the rights and interests of the Tribes are considered and protected, in accordance with relevant treaties, executive orders, legislation, and federal policies. This includes consulting with Tribal representatives, identifying and protecting important archaeological, religious, and/or sacred sites, and providing Tribal members with appropriate access to these sites.

1.9 PLAN CONFORMANCE

Fire management direction in the 12 existing LUPs in the District (Figure 1-5; see Table 1-2) emphasizes wildland fire suppression, briefly touches upon using RxFire and fuels treatments, and is generally silent concerning the use of WFU to benefit the resources. The existing LUPs do not address the management of fire‘s role in the landscape. Other issues not well addressed in the current LUPs include:

- Communities-at-risk and issues surrounding the Wildland Urban Interface.
- Public and firefighter safety.
- Fire impacts on air quality/visibility.
- Fire hazard and fuels reduction treatment methods.
- The departure of existing fire regimes from historical conditions.
- The desired role of fire and how fire can help meet resource objectives.

While fire suppression of unwanted fires would continue, the plan amendments are needed to allow for the use of fire to help achieve desired resource enhancement and protection objectives. These objectives include reduction in continuity or eradication of cheatgrass and/or medusahead rye from Low- and Mid-elevation Shrub, removal of juniper trees from Mid-elevation Shrub, removal of both dead trees and ladder fuels from Dry Conifer forests, and encouragement of vegetative regeneration in Aspen/Conifer and Mountain Shrub cover types (a detailed description of these vegetation cover types is given in Section 3.2, Cohesive Strategy and Vegetation Resources [Issue 1]). Alternative B – The Proposed Action modifies, supplements, or changes existing fire-management direction in the District‘s LUPs to allow the amount of treatment necessary to address these objectives.

Existing plans are not current with planning policy and guidance (see Appendix C of the BLM Planning Handbook) or the National Fire Plan. They lack adequate direction for the management of fire in the ecosystem. Alternative B – The Proposed Action would amend the existing LUPs by adding new management direction for fuels, fire and related vegetation management.

Approval of the ROD for this project would amend all 12 existing LUPs listed in Table 1-2. The new fire management directions presented in the selected alternative would be incorporated into each of the 12 plans, thereby bringing them into compliance with current fire policy and planning direction. Appendix B compares how each alternative would amend each of the existing LUPs when compared to the existing LUPs‘ direction and current program (i.e., Alternative A – The No Action Alternative).

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CHAPTER TWO - DESCRIPTIONS OF ALTERNATIVES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The BLM is responding to the need to comply with the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy (1995, updated 2001), as well as the need to implement Appendix C of the BLM Land Use Planning Handbook (H-1601-1), which provides direction for fire management planning. Accordingly, the BLM proposes to amend the District's 12 LUPs with updated management direction for the purpose of managing fire, fuels, and related vegetation resources. The BLM's proposal constitutes the Proposed Action (referred to in this chapter as Alternative B – The Proposed Action or simply Alternative B; described in detail below), which is being considered in this Draft EIS.

The proposed FMDA would provide LUP-level fire management direction for the District's FMPs, normal fire rehabilitation plans (NFRP), and site-specific restoration plans, and would provide updated data and techniques for the development of management direction. Amending the 12 existing LUPs would promote a more effective and economical approach to improving the health of BLM-administered lands by facilitating the return of fire to its natural role in the ecosystem through adaptive management. Additionally, the FMDA would incorporate public safety, fire-fighter safety, protection of property, and communities-at-risk into fire management direction.

This chapter describes four alternatives: A (the No Action Alternative), B, C, and D (the Preferred Alternative). As defined in NEPA, the development of alternatives is a necessary part of the environmental impacts analysis process. As stated in the regulations for implementing NEPA, the goal of this process is to "present the environmental impacts of the proposal and the alternatives in comparative form, thus sharply defining the issues and providing a clear basis for choice among options by the decision maker and the public" (40 CFR 1502.14).

The regulations implementing NEPA also require consideration of a "range of alternatives" (40 CFR 1505.1(e)). This range must include only reasonable alternatives, meaning those alternatives that are both technologically practical and economically viable. The purpose of developing a range of alternative actions is to address issues and concerns expressed about Alternative B during the public scoping process, listed in Section 1.4, Identification of Relevant Issues. Alternatives found to be unreasonable can be dismissed from detailed study; however, a brief discussion of the reasons for their elimination must be included. The four alternatives for this project have been developed with input from agencies and the public and have been evaluated in detail for their potential environmental impacts.

The remainder of this chapter has been organized as follows:

- **Section 2.2** describes the role of the BLM and participating agencies.
- **Section 2.3** describes the process of alternative development.
- **Section 2.4** provides complete descriptions of each of the four alternatives and the issues that they were designed to address.

- **Section 2.5** provides a description of how the new fire direction would be implemented, and the roles of monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive management in that implementation.
- **Section 2.6** presents the alternatives that were considered for further analysis but eliminated, as well as rationales for their elimination.
- **Section 2.7** provides a description of activities considered to be reasonably foreseeable future actions. Reasonably foreseeable future actions include those that have already been approved but not yet implemented, as well as those that can be reasonably anticipated for future proposal and implementation. Reasonably foreseeable future actions are analyzed in conjunction with Alternative B so as to assess cumulative effects.
- **Section 2.8** provides a summary of the alternatives, potential environmental effects associated with the alternatives, and a summary of fire management restrictions.

2.2 BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT (BLM) COORDINATION

The BLM coordinated the formation of an interdisciplinary team (or ID team) to ensure full compliance with other federal, state, and local agency requirements regarding the proposed fire and fuels management direction and to assist in the development of alternatives. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game (IDFG) have participated in this planning effort since its initiation. The BLM has also received input from USFS, NPS, INEEL, and local communities in its planning efforts and activities.

The BLM has provided the general direction for the ID team discussions, evaluations, and decisions. In conjunction with this direction, the ID team has provided oversight of the analysis process with the role of insuring that the EIS contains the relevant information to meet the needs of the BLM and all other agencies involved.

2.3 DEVELOPMENT OF ALTERNATIVES

The BLM compiled a comprehensive list of the issues and concerns raised during public scoping (see Section 1.4, Identification of Relevant Issues). Most comments focused on potential environmental impacts and alternative management options. After public scoping, development of potential alternatives to address or incorporate these comments began, with resource-specific input from the BLM and cooperating agencies.

Although the resources and activities occurring in the District are administered by the BLM, participating agencies with specific concerns provided their own input to the alternative development process. For example, the USFWS provided the technical information specific to Threatened and Endangered Species (TES) species-related issues. The BLM used this information in their decision-making process to ensure technically feasible alternatives were considered with regard to TES species.

Alternatives considered for detailed analysis in a Draft EIS are subject to a screening evaluation, which is intended to determine whether they meet the Purpose of and Need for the project and whether they reduce potential environmental impacts, in this case to resources such as soil, vegetation, air quality, and health and human safety. Alternatives must also be technologically

and economically feasible. Based on the screening criteria, a number of alternatives to Alternative B were eliminated from consideration (see Section 2.6, Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Environmental Analysis), and four alternatives remain for detailed analysis in this Draft EIS.

2.4 DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVE B – THE PROPOSED ACTION AND THE OTHER ALTERNATIVES

In accordance with BLM planning policies, all four alternatives are described with the same basic elements appropriate to LUP-level decision-making regarding fire management direction. These elements include the following:

- Landscape-level fire management goals and objectives, including desired wildland fire conditions.
- The suite of management actions that can be used to meet DFC, including areas that are suitable for WFU to benefit resources and areas where WFU is not appropriate due to social, economic, political, or resource constraints.
- Criteria used to establish fire management priorities.
- Restrictions on fire management practices, if any are needed to protect natural or cultural values.

Four alternatives have been developed to address the two issues raised during public and agency scoping (as described in Section 1.4, Identification of Relevant Issues) and will be analyzed in detail. Each alternative is structured in the following manner:

- Assumptions: Formulated to guide the development of each alternative.
- Goals/Objectives: Related to landscape-level fire management and including DFC for fuels, vegetation, and wildland fire conditions.
- Management Actions: Strategies or actions that can be used to meet DFC.
- Prioritization Criteria: Criteria for fire management presented in order of priority.
- Wildland Fire Use (WFU) Areas: Areas identified as:
    - suitable for possible WFU for resource benefit, or
    - not suitable for WFU due to social, economic, political or resource constraints.
- Treatment Levels: Identified for analysis purposes for the life of the LUP amendment.
- Fire Management Restrictions: Placed on fire management practices (including both wildland fire suppression and fuels management) to protect natural or cultural resource values.

Certain aspects of the four alternatives are common to all alternatives; they are summarized in the next section. The unique elements of each alternative are discussed subsequently, and alternatives are summarized in tables at the end of this chapter.

Alternative objectives and broad treatment levels (footprint-acres) are described in terms of treatments to the twelve general vegetation cover types found in the District. These vegetation cover types are 1) Low-elevation Shrub, 2) Perennial Grass, 3) Annual Grass, 4) Mid-elevation Shrub, 5) Juniper, 6) Mountain Shrub, 7) Aspen/Conifer, 8) Dry Conifer, 9) Salt Desert Shrub, 10) Vegetated Rock/Lava, 11) Wet/Cold Conifer, and 12) Riparian. Complete descriptions of these vegetation types are given in Section 3.2, Cohesive Strategy and Vegetation Resources (Issue 1).

2.4.1 FOOTPRINT-ACRES AND TREATMENT-ACRES

Appendix C of the BLM Planning Handbook (H-1601-1) specifies that treatment levels (footprint-acres) be identified for comparison and analysis of effects by alternative in Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences. Since some BLM-administered land acres may burn and/or be treated multiple times to achieve management objectives, it is important to understand the difference between the terms *footprint-acre* and *treatment-acre*, which are used throughout this document. *Footprint-acre(s)* refers to a single area or acreage within which some intervention, manipulation or treatment is/are performed. *Treatment-acre(s)* refers to the multiple interventions, manipulations or treatments on the same footprint-acre(s) to achieve management objectives. Footprint-acres of a given area will never be greater than treatment-acres of that same area. However, treatment-acres may be equal to or greater than footprint-acres.

An example would be a farmer who wants to raise potatoes on a one-acre parcel. First, he plants the potatoes, which would be the first pass over the one-acre parcel. A second pass over the parcel is to fertilize. A third pass is to spray herbicides, and a fourth pass is to harvest the potato crop. The farmer will have worked the same one-acre (footprint-acre) parcel four times, which is the equivalent of four acres (treatment-acres) of treatment.

Expected treatments over the next 10 years are different among the four alternatives and vary by vegetation cover type. The acres proposed for treatment by alternatives are not to be viewed as targets but rather as levels of the magnitude of work that needs to be done. Broad treatment levels are specified in footprint-acres. Essentially, the amount of BLM-administered land to be affected by each of the four alternatives can be compared at broad treatment levels (footprint-acres), while budgeting is best estimated using total treatment-acres.

2.4.2 DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION (DFC)

DFC is a management objective. It indicates the production of a distribution of vegetation age classes across a landscape that reduces hazardous fuels, promotes a healthier and more diverse vegetation structure and composition, and returns the currently altered fire regimes to fire regimes that more closely parallel historical fire regimes. DFC varies among vegetation types and is an objective of Alternatives B, C, and D. Management goals and DFC for the District's vegetation cover types are presented in Table 2-1.

Uncharacteristic plants (e.g., cheatgrass, highly invasive weeds, and encroaching juniper), which compose minor portions of DFC (see Table 2-1), are not expected to be completely eradicated and are expected to remain part of vegetation cover types. Assumptions and calculations of DFC are discussed in Appendix C.

TABLE 2-1. PROPOSED MANAGEMENT GOALS AND DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION (DFC) FOR VEGETATION COVER TYPES IN THE DISTRICT		
Management Goals	**Desired Future Condition (DFC)**	
	Vegetation/Fuels Age Classes	**Percent in DFC**
Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass and Annual Grass		
Increase the number of acres with a native/native like shrub-grass mix. Spatial arrangement of varying age-classes should occur in a mosaic across the landscape.	Perennial Grass: <15 years old Grass/shrub mix: 15-30 years old Shrub/grass mix: >30 years old	14% 14% 52%
No DFC was set for Crested wheatgrass because no treatments are proposed for these areas.	Crested wheatgrass	N/A
Decrease the number of acres with more than 10% cheatgrass cover and/or weeds.	Cheatgrass/weeds	<20%
Mid-elevation Shrub (Including Juniper Encroachment Acres)		
Increase the number of acres with a native/native like shrub-grass mix. Spatial arrangement of varying age-classes should occur in a mosaic across the landscape.	Perennial Grass: <5 years old Grass/shrub mix: 5-15 years old Shrub/grass mix: >15 years old	23% 45% 23%
Decrease the acres of Mid-elevation Shrub encroached upon by juniper, and/or any other undesirable species present.	Juniper encroachment Cheatgrass/weeds	7% 2%
Increase acres burned to more closely approximate the historical fire regime. Improve composition and structure of Mid-elevation Shrub types to better represent historical sagebrush steppe cover types.		
Mountain Shrub		
Increase the acres of early- and mid-seral stages. Spatial arrangement of varying age-classes should occur in a mosaic across the landscape.	Perennial grass/shrub: <10 years old Shrub/perennial Grass: 10-20 years old Shrub dominated: >20 years old	33% 33% 33%
Increase acres burned to more closely approximate the historical fire regime. Improve composition and structure of Mountain Shrub types to better represent historical Mountain Shrub cover types.		

TABLE 2-1. PROPOSED MANAGEMENT GOALS AND DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION (DFC) FOR VEGETATION COVER TYPES IN THE DISTRICT		
Management Goals	**Desired Future Condition (DFC)**	
	Vegetation/Fuels Age Classes	**Percent in DFC**
Aspen/Conifer and Dry Conifer		
Increase acres of early- and mid-seral Aspen/Conifer and Dry Conifer cover types (pure Aspen and Aspen/Conifer mix). Spatial arrangement of varying age-classes should occur in a mosaic across the landscape.	Aspen: <30 years old Aspen/Conifer mix: 30-50 years Dry Conifer: >50 years old	40% 40% 20%
Increase acres burned to more closely approximate the historical fire regime. Improve composition and structure of Aspen/Conifer and Dry Conifer types to better represent historical Aspen/Conifer and Dry Conifer cover types.		
Salt Desert Shrub		
Maintain or increase acres with a native/native like shrub-grass mix. Spatial arrangement of varying age-classes should occur in a mosaic across the landscape.	Perennial Grass: <30 years old Shrub/Grass/Bare Ground Mix: >30 years old	20% 76%
Decrease acres with cheatgrass, weeds and/or other undesirable species present.	Cheatgrass/weeds	4%
Maintain fire frequency and size to approximate the historical fire regime. Maintain or improve Salt Desert Shrub types to better represent those historical cover types.		
Vegetated Rock/Lava		
Maintain or increase acres with a native/native like shrub-grass mix. Spatial arrangement of varying age-classes should occur in a mosaic across the landscape.	Perennial Grass Rock/Shrub/Grass/Tree mix	6% 80%
Decrease acres with cheatgrass, weeds and/or other undesirable species present.	Cheatgrass/weeds	<14%
Maintain fire frequency and size to approximate the historical fire regime. Maintain Vegetated Rock/Lava types to better represent those historical cover types.		
Wet/Cold Conifer		
Maintain the mix of early, mid and late seral stands of lodgepole pine forest.	Shrub/grass: <30 years old Shrub/tree: 30-75 years old Tree-dominated: >75 years old	30% 44% 26%

TABLE 2-1. PROPOSED MANAGEMENT GOALS AND DESIRED FUTURE CONDITION (DFC) FOR VEGETATION COVER TYPES IN THE DISTRICT		
Management Goals	**Desired Future Condition (DFC)**	
	Vegetation/Fuels Age Classes	**Percent in DFC**
Maintain fire frequency and size to approximate the historical fire regime. Maintain or improve Wet/Cold Conifer types to better represent those historical cover types.		
Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)		
Decrease fire frequency and size in the vicinity of the WUI to protect public and fire-fighter safety, public resources, and private lands.	Decrease fire hazard from 'high' to 'moderate' or 'low' by implementing actions outlined in County/Community Mitigation Plans.	

2.4.3 MANAGEMENT COMMON TO ALL ALTERNATIVES

All of the alternatives were designed to meet the general goals outlined in the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy. The following elements are common to all four alternatives.

2.4.3.1 Assumptions

- Sage grouse Stronghold Habitats would be protected and enhanced.
- Key ecological components in plant and animal communities would be protected and enhanced.
- Where fire is not an appropriate tool due to risk to life, property, or resources, use of mechanical and/or chemical treatments would be considered to meet resource management objectives.
- All vegetation types would be moved towards DFC or from FRCC 2 and FRCC 3 towards FRCC 1. FRCC is an indicator of fire-related risk to key ecosystem components. A full description of FRCC is given in Section 3.2, Cohesive Strategy and Vegetation Resources (Issue 1).

2.4.3.2 Prioritization Criteria

Wildland Urban Interface areas are identified in the National Fire Plan as requiring protection and are common to all alternatives. Communities-at-risk in the Wildland Urban Interface were identified in the *Federal Register* (66FR751 8/17/2001) and are assessed via County/Community Mitigation plans initiated by local fire chiefs and via statewide interagency planning efforts.

The National Fire Plan mandates that priority be given to protecting these communities from wildland fire and to preventing fires that start on private lands from spreading to BLM-administered lands. In all four alternatives, Wildland Urban Interface areas would take precedence if suppression resources are limited and life and property are threatened. Vegetation treatments in and around Wildland Urban Interface areas would be conducted with the goal of reducing fire hazard.

2.4.3.3 Fire Management Restrictions

Certain wildland fire suppression activities and proactive treatment restrictions would be implemented under all alternatives and would be specified in each of the 12 LUP amendments. Certain restrictions would be applied to suppression activities with the intent of protecting sensitive resources. However, as wildland fire suppression is generally an emergency activity, a field office manager could choose to override the restrictions to protect life, property, or valuable resources. Suppression restrictions would be further defined within each zone's FMP and would be addressed in project-specific NEPA documents. All restrictions are intended to prevent significant impacts to natural and human resources. They are organized according to the resource discipline they protect and are considered in the analysis of all alternatives.

2.4.3.3.1 Wildland Fire Suppression Restrictions

The following suppression restrictions will be applied to all suppression actions occurring throughout the District, consistent with NFP policy and LUP direction:

General

- A Wildland Fire Situation Analysis will be initiated as per the Redbook (Interagency Standards for Fire and Aviation Operations) when:

a wildland fire has not been contained by the initial attack resources dispatched to the fire,

a wildland fire has not been contained within the management objectives identified in Section IIID of this plan, and

a wildland fire has not been contained within the first operational period and there is no estimate of containment or control.

Cultural Resources and Historic Trails

- Dozer blading should not occur within 300 feet of playas or dry lakebeds to protect cultural resources. Buffer zones greater than 300 feet from playas and dry lake beds are preferable.
- Dozer blading should not occur within 300 feet of known historic trails and cultural sites.
- An archaeologist will be notified of any cultural resources encountered during suppression activities.

Hazardous Materials

- The use of hazardous substances for fire control would be avoided whenever practical.

Noxious Weeds

- To minimize spread of noxious weeds, equipment used for extended attack or Type I/II incidents should be cleaned before arriving on-site and prior to leaving the incident. Staging areas and fire camps should avoid sites with noxious weed infestations.

Recreation

- Developed recreation sites and structures on public lands will be protected.
- Follow Minimum Impact Suppression Techniques (MIST) guidelines where appropriate.

Riparian Areas

- Dozer blading should not occur within 300 feet of perennial streams, unless approved by the authorized officer. Buffer zones greater than 300 feet from riparian areas are preferable.
- Avoid application of retardant or foam within 300 feet of waterways. Exceptions would be made to protect lives and property when safety is an immediate imperative, or under the direction of a Resource Advisor when an escape would cause more long-term damage to aquatic resources.

Special Management Areas

- Within Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs), fuels and vegetation treatments and wildland fire management activities should follow BLM Manual H-8550-1, Interim Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review. The use of earth-moving equipment within these areas requires approval of the authorized officer.
- Fire camps and staging areas should be placed outside of special management areas.
- Encourage use of natural firebreaks and existing roads and trails to contain a wildland fire.
- Evaluate the resource values, hazards present, and management prescriptions within specific areas when applying guidelines to Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACECs).

Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive (TES) Species

- Establishment of control lines, base camps, and support facilities should be avoided in habitat deemed critical for TES unless life and property are threatened.
- Maintain interagency cooperation to facilitate coordinated fire management activities across administrative boundaries.
- Field Managers will assign a BLM Resource Advisor to ensure that resource management concerns are adequately addressed and that necessary mitigation occurs.
- Field Managers will ensure resource staff initiates emergency consultation with the USFWS whenever suppression activities impact listed species habitat.

Vegetation

- Blading should occur on existing roads where possible. Blading through undisturbed areas, especially those supporting native cover types, should be avoided unless necessary to protect life, property, or resource values.

2.4.3.3.2 Fire and Non-Fire Vegetation Treatment Restrictions

The following fire and non-fire vegetation treatment restrictions will be applied to site-specific treatment actions occurring throughout the District, consistent with NFP policy and LUP direction:

General

- To reduce potential resource impacts from chemical treatments, herbicide use would conform to application criteria described in the 1991 Environmental Impact Statement for Vegetation Treatment on BLM Lands in Thirteen Western States. Additionally, use would conform, to instructions from BLM Manual 9011 Chemical Pest Control, as well as label restrictions and current policies. In addition, the prescription for herbicide application (desired, optimum environmental conditions) would evaluate off-site migration and non-target species by assessing wind speed and direction, temperature, precipitation forecast, soil infiltration potential, constraints on overland water transport due to precipitation or flooding, establishment of riparian buffer strips, and risk to special status species. Fishery and/or wildlife biologists would assist project planners in selecting

appropriate herbicides approved for aquatic use, when applicable, or for use among or near terrestrial fauna sensitive to herbicides.

- Consider the economic effects of alternative fuels management practices. Promote local involvement and economic benefits from fuels reduction projects.
- Continue to collaborate with local partners to assess WUI areas and update existing mitigation plans to implement fuels treatments.

Air Quality

- All fire activities on BLM-administered lands would be done in coordination with the Montana/Idaho Airshed Group Smoke Management Program. Under this program, RxFire and WFU could be restricted when regional or local air quality is compromised, or if the project would negatively affect visual quality in Class 1 Airsheds (Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks, Bridger Wilderness, Sawtooth Wilderness, and Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve Wilderness) Non-attainment Areas (PM_{10}), and sensitive receptors.

Cultural Resources and Historic Trails

- The FO will ensure that required and appropriate cultural resource inventories/surveys are complete prior to implementing site-specific fuels projects to meet BLM policy.
- Dozer blading should not occur within 300 feet of known historic trails and cultural sites.
- All proposed fire and non-fire (mechanical, chemical and seeding) vegetation treatment actions will be assessed in consultation with the SHPO for their potential to effect cultural resources. Where previous inventory has been sufficient to identify vulnerable cultural resources, no inventory should be needed. However, where adequate inventory is lacking, appropriate and required inventory of the area as determined in consultation with the SHPO will be conducted.
- All rxfires and fuels projects will be subject to further site-specific analyses and Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act compliance and consultation.
- A Class II or Class III inventory will be conducted of all proposed RxFire areas unless previous inventory has been deemed adequate in consultation with the SHPO.

Hazardous Materials and Abandoned Mine Sites

- Hazardous materials and abandoned mine sites identified within any specific fuels management or vegetation treatment area would be avoided.

Livestock Grazing

- All RxFire treatment areas would be rested from livestock grazing for a minimum of two growing seasons or until vegetation establishment and resource objectives are achieved. Monitoring criteria typically include soil stability and desired vegetation cover. Site specific plans would address specific monitoring criteria.

Placeholder species

- Plant materials used in re-vegetation actions would be predominately native. However, non-native species may be used in re-vegetation actions on harsh or degraded sites where

they are needed to structurally mimic the natural plant community and prevent soil loss and invasion by exotic annual grasses and noxious weeds. The species used would be those that have the highest probability of establishment on these sites. These "placeholders" would maintain the area for future native restoration. Native seed would be used more frequently and at larger scales as species adapted to local areas become more available.

Recreation

- Treatments would be designed to minimize impacts to the managed recreation setting character and to the recreation experiences and benefits desired by the recreation participant. In areas where the setting character and/or the desired benefit outcomes are not defined, treatments in developed or high-use recreation areas would be designed to minimize impacts to the recreational resource or users.
- Treatments in developed or high-use recreation areas would be designed to minimize impacts to the recreational resource or users.

Riparian Areas

- No dozer blading should occur within 300 feet of perennial streams. Buffer zones greater than 300 feet are preferable.

Special Management Areas

- Within WSAs, fuels and vegetation treatments and WFU should follow BLM Manual H-8550-1, *Interim Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review.* The use of earth-moving equipment within these areas requires approval of the authorized officer; however, minimizing use of tools is the preferred practice.

Threatened, Endangers, and Sensitive (TES) Species

- All fuels management and vegetation treatment activities in areas supporting threatened and endangered species would be conducted in consultation with the USFWS.
- Fuels management and vegetation treatment activities would be conducted according to standards and guidelines in the Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Management Plan (Greater Yellowstone Bald Eagle Working Group 1996).
- Gray wolf *(Canis lupus)* populations in the area, which includes portions of the District, have been designated as experimental/nonessential. Presence or absence of gray wolf dens or rendezvous sites in fuels management or vegetation treatment areas would be determined prior to initiating projects.
- Fuels management and vegetation treatments that may occur within Lynx Analysis Units (LAU) would be conducted according to standards and guidelines in the Canada Lynx Conservation and Assessment Strategy (USDA Forest Service & U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2000).
- Fuels management and vegetation treatments that may occur within the Little Lost River drainage would be conducted according to standards and guidelines developed for bull trout *(Salvelinus confluentus)* Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas on BLM lands within the geographic range of bull trout (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1998, 1999).

- For those portions of the Snake River drainages that support populations of threatened and endangered Snake River mollusks, consult with the USFWS for fuels management and vegetation treatments where there is potential for effect.
- Fuels management and vegetation treatment areas within grizzly bear *(Ursus arctos horribilis)* management units (BMUs) would be coordinated with USFS activities to comply with restrictions on road density and number and juxtaposition of management activities within BMUs, as provided for in the Draft Conservation Strategy for the Grizzly Bear in the Yellowstone Area (USFWS 1999a), the 1997 Targhee National Forest Revised Forest Plan (USFS 1997), and in the Yellowstone Conservation Strategy (USFWS 2003), when it becomes effective.
- Riparian cottonwood forests with willow understories that may be impacted by fuels management and vegetation treatments would be surveyed for yellow-billed cuckoos *(Coccyzus americanus)* prior to initiating project activities.
- Fuels treatments proposed in areas supporting sage and sharp-tailed grouse would be coordinated with IDFG.
- Fuels treatments in areas supporting sage grouse and sharp-tailed grouse breeding and wintering habitat may be restricted as identified by LUPs.
- Sage grouse Key and Source Habitats would be maintained and enhanced when possible within Low- and Mid-Elevation Shrub types. Treatments to enhance and restore habitat would be focused in areas where the sagebrush component is lost or dead and the understory degraded.

Visual Resources

- Treatments occurring in areas classified or inventoried as Visual Resource Management (VRM) Class I and II would consider visual qualities to preserve the landscape character. Wherever possible, landscape modifications would replicate a natural line, form, color and texture found in the surrounding area. Treatments that result in long-term disruption of natural visual qualities (e.g., drill seeding that establishes vegetation rows) should be avoided or hidden by design.

Wildlife

- Seasonal guidelines may be applied if needed to mitigate the impacts to big game species from planned fuels management and vegetation treatments as specified in LUPs.
- Restrictions may be imposed on fuels management and vegetation treatment projects in areas supporting nesting raptors as per LUPs. Treatment proposals would be coordinated with IDFG.

2.4.3.3.3 Emergency Stabilization and Rehabilitation (ES&R) Restrictions

The District's Normal Fire Rehabilitation Plan contains ES&R restrictions that would be applied to all site-specific ES&R actions occurring throughout the District.

2.4.3.3.4 Community Assistance/Protection Restrictions

The following community assistance restrictions will be applied to site-specific community assessment actions occurring throughout the District, consistent with NFP policy and LUP direction:

- Continue to collaborate with local partners to assess WUI areas, update existing mitigation plans, and implement a prevention and education program.
- Work with other federal agencies, state, county and private entities to update County Mitigation Plans
- Provide Rural Fire Assistance (RFA), as identified in Mitigation Plans, to rural fire districts. Assess and increase suppression capabilities and effectiveness by providing RFA to local fire suppression organizations.
- Provide planning and implementation assistance to private landowners so hazardous fuels can be reduced as identified in Mitigation Plans.
- Provide funding to implement fire education projects identified in Mitigation Plans.
- To reduce fuel hazards and the threat of catastrophic fire events, including consideration of any local Community at Risk (CAR).

2.4.4 ALTERNATIVE A – THE NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE (CURRENT PLAN DIRECTION)

Alternative A is consistent with the 12 current LUPs' direction, regulation, and policy. It emphasizes wildland fire suppression and minimizes WFU. Therefore, this alternative focuses on reactive stabilization and rehabilitation treatments following wildland fire (approximately 52 percent of footprint-acres in this alternative), as opposed to proactive restoration treatments (approximately 48 percent of footprint-acres in this alternative).

Vegetation treatments would be conducted on a small scale and emphasize benefits to specific resources (e.g., livestock forage or wildlife habitat). The current LUPs detail activities in these areas although they lack specific guidance for WFU, restoration actions, hazardous fuels reduction, and Wildland Urban Interface protection. The activities detailed in current LUPs are being undertaken in response to new regulations, policy and national direction. These types of activities are compatible with other existing LUP program goals/objectives, and the existing LUPs do not preclude these activities.

There are no areas designated as suitable for WFU in this alternative (Figure 2-1). Some of the existing LUPs do, however, allow the use of limited fire suppression, which in some LUPs meets the definition of WFU. Current LUPs in which use of limited suppression meets the definition of WFU are the Cassia, Monument, Medicine Lodge, and Pocatello RMPs and the Twin Falls, Big Desert, and Little Lost Birch Creek MFPs. (For more specific information, refer to the appropriate plan.)

The District is not currently planning any District-wide WFU or limited suppression programs because of lack of current inventory information and also because WFU is not currently a high priority. The District's current high priorities are rehabilitation and restoration. Under

Alternative A, WFU may be considered in the future subject to further planning and NEPA analysis.

Over a 10-year period, up to approximately 250,200 footprint-acres would be treated under this alternative.

2.4.4.1 Assumptions

Annual treatment levels would remain the same as those observed between 1995 through 2000.

2.4.4.2 Goals/Objectives and Management Actions

1. Emphasize protection from and rehabilitation after wildland fire within the Wildland Urban Interface.

   Management Actions

   Use suppression to safely manage and suppress wildland fires.

   Use mechanical, chemical, and seeding treatments for rehabilitation following wildland fire.

   In cooperation with state, county, and local governments and fire departments, develop mitigation plans and implement plan actions, including fuels reduction projects, rural fire department assistance, and public education.

2. Reduce fine fuels and invasive exotic plants and create perennial cover types so that wildland fire occurs less frequently and at a smaller scale on the landscape than it currently does.

   Management Actions

   Adopt the Appropriate Management Response in Low-elevation Shrub: suppression of all wildland fire starts to protect existing sagebrush cover types.

   Following wildland fire, use chemical, mechanical, and seeding treatments with appropriate plant materials to attempt to stabilize sites and prevent dominance of invasive annual vegetation and noxious weeds. The use of native plant materials would be emphasized.

   RxFire may be used to prepare areas for subsequent chemical, mechanical, and/or seeding treatments.

3. Conduct fire and non-fire vegetation treatments in Mid-elevation Shrub, Juniper, Dry Conifer, Aspen/Conifer, and Mountain Shrub.

   Management Actions

   Use mechanical, chemical, seeding, or RxFire treatments to meet resource management objectives.

   Remove encroaching or mature juniper using chemical, mechanical, and RxFire treatments to re-establish, maintain, or enhance Mid-elevation Shrub cover types.

2.4.4.3 Prioritization Criteria

When multiple wildland fire ignitions occur, suppression priorities are:

1. Protect the Wildland Urban Interface and communities-at-risk where public and fire-fighter health and safety are a concern.
2. Minimize risks to life and property.
3. Minimize risks to resources.

Generally, the highest suppression priorities would be in Low- and Mid-elevation Shrub cover types unless life and/or property are at risk. On an annual basis, FMPs would re-visit priorities for resources. Priorities for establishing fire and non-fire vegetation treatments are:

1. In areas dominated by cheatgrass or other annual species, conduct wildland fire rehabilitation or proactive restoration.
2. Accomplish resource-related objectives.

2.4.4.4 Wildland Fire Use (WFU) Areas

No acres in the District would be identified as being suitable for WFU for resource benefit, due to social, economic, political, or resource constraints. The locations of areas that are not suitable for WFU are shown in Figure 2-1. Appendix D identifies the specific suitable/not suitable acres by field office.

2.4.4.5 Treatment Levels

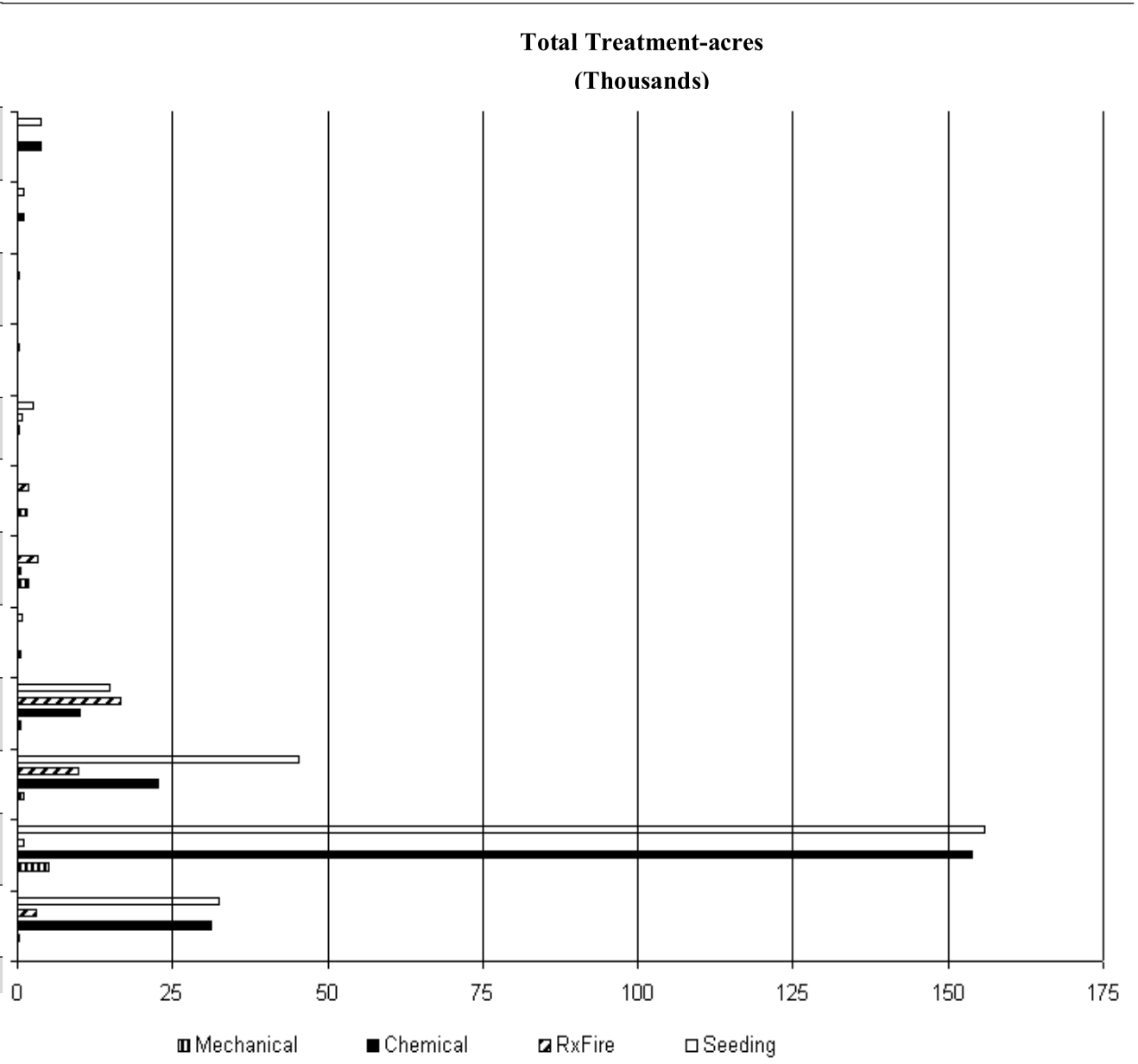
To implement Alternative A, 250,200 footprint-acres would be treated over a 10-year period. Table 2-2 identifies the vegetation type/acres and footprint-acres and graphically illustrates the broad treatment levels (treatment-acres) for the various treatment methods (i.e., mechanical and chemical treatment, RxFire, and seeding).

2.4.4.6 Fire Management Restrictions

Alternative A would have identical fire management restrictions to those common to all alternatives previously described under Section 2.4.3.3, Fire Management Restrictions.

TABLE 2-2. VEGETATION TYPE AND ACRES, FOOTPRINT-ACRES, AND 10-YEAR TOTAL TREATMENT-ACRES BY TREATMENT TYPE, ALTERNATIVE A

Vegetation Type	Vegetation Acres	Footprint-acres
Vegetated Rock/ Lava	582,057	3,800
Salt Desert Shrub	37,792	1,000
Riparian	30,903	400
Wet/Cold Conifer	24,965	200
Mountain Shrub	339,815	2,800
Aspen/Conifer	56,290	1,800
Dry Conifer	88,768	2,800
Juniper	90,966	800
Mid-elevation Shrub	848,782	24,900
Annual Grass	330,581	22,600
Perennial Grass	1,436,031	155,900
Low-elevation Shrub	1,531,220	33,200
Total Footprint		**250,200**



2.4.5 ALTERNATIVE B – THE PROPOSED ACTION

Alternative B would incorporate new policy, guidance, and changes brought about by the National Fire Program, which has been developed since the existing LUPs were approved. This alternative emphasizes the increased use of fire, including RxFire and WFU, to more closely approximate historical fire regimes and to prepare sites for restoration treatments.

Post-wildland fire treatments would be used to stabilize and rehabilitate areas in the Low-elevation Shrub, Annual Grass, and Mid-elevation Shrub cover types, where juniper encroachment is a problem. Restoration treatments would be used primarily in Low-elevation Shrub, Annual Grass, Aspen/Conifer, Dry Conifer, Mountain Shrub, and Mid-elevation Shrub encroached by juniper. About 3.3 million acres are considered suitable for wildland fire use (WFU) under this alternative (see Figure 2-1). These areas were designated by field office personnel where it was determined that WFU could benefit resources and help attain management goals.

In general, WFU would not be used where there are critical wildlife habitats, past rehabilitation treatments, small tracts of BLM-administered land, or public health and safety concerns. Appropriate Management Response would be used in wildland fire suppression. Full suppression is the Appropriate Management Response where life and property are at risk or in Low-elevation Shrub. Restoration would be emphasized (approximately 80 percent of footprint-acres) while conducting rehabilitation (approximately 20 percent of footprint-acres), as needed.

Over a 10-year period, under this alternative, up to approximately 646,000 footprint-acres would be treated (approximately three times the acreage in Alternative A).

2.4.5.1 Assumptions

Treatment levels would be limited by existing operational capabilities and resources.

2.4.5.2 Goals/Objectives and Management Actions

1. Make progress towards DFC in Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass, and Annual Grass cover types, where wildland fire should occur less frequently and at a smaller scale on the landscape than it currently does.

   Management Actions

   Use the Appropriate Management Response to safely manage wildland fire and reduce the number of acres burned to a level similar to the historical regime. The Appropriate Management Response in Low-elevation Shrub is suppression of all wildland fire starts to protect existing and restored sagebrush cover types.

   Conduct fuels and restoration projects in areas invaded by or at risk of invasion by annual, exotic vegetation and noxious weeds.

   Following WFU and RxFire treatments, use chemical, mechanical, and seeding treatments with appropriate plant materials to attempt to stabilize sites and prevent dominance of

invasive, annual vegetation and noxious weeds. The use of native plant materials would be emphasized.

Allow WFU and RxFire in areas dominated by annual species following site-specific NEPA analysis.

2. Make progress towards DFC in the Mid-elevation Shrub, Juniper, Dry Conifer, Aspen/Conifer, and Mountain Shrub vegetation types, where wildland fire should be occurring more frequently on the landscape than it currently does.

Management Actions

Use Appropriate Management Response to safely manage wildland fires.

Allow fire use following site-specific NEPA analyses.

Design vegetation treatments to simulate the effect of historical fire on vegetation structure and composition.

In Mid-elevation Shrub, conduct RxFire and chemical, mechanical, and seeding treatments in all areas invaded by or at risk of invasion by annual, exotic vegetation and noxious weeds.

Maintain or restore Mid-elevation Shrub cover types, using chemical, mechanical, and RxFire treatments to remove encroaching or mature juniper.

Following WFU and RxFire treatments, use chemical, mechanical, and seeding treatments with appropriate plant materials to attempt to stabilize sites and prevent dominance of invasive, annual vegetation and noxious weeds. The use of native plant materials would be emphasized.

3. Maintain or make progress towards DFC in the Wet/Cold Conifer and Salt Desert Shrub cover types and in vegetation types where fire frequencies are within the historical range of variability.

Management Actions

Use Appropriate Management Response to safely manage and suppress wildland fires.

Allow WFU in Vegetated Rock/Lava, following site-specific NEPA analysis.

Generally limit projects in Salt Desert Shrub, Vegetated Rock/Lava, and Wet/Cold Conifer cover types to chemical treatments to control noxious weeds and invasive species.

2.4.5.3 Prioritization Criteria

When multiple wildland fire ignitions occur, the suppression priorities are:

1. Protect the Wildland Urban Interface and communities-at-risk where public and fire-fighter health and safety are a concern.
2. Minimize risks to sagebrush steppe.
3. Minimize risks to Dry Conifer.

Criteria for establishing vegetation treatments are:

1. Sagebrush steppe protection/maintenance. Prioritize treatment to areas that are adjacent to existing sagebrush cover types.
2. Sagebrush steppe restoration.
3. Aspen/Conifer, Mountain Shrub, Dry Conifer restoration.
4. Protection of areas of key ecosystem components that are at high risk of loss.

2.4.5.4 Wildland Fire Use (WFU) Areas

Approximately 3,333,400 acres across the District would be identified as suitable for WFU for resource benefit, and approximately 2,066,500 acres would be identified as not suitable/ appropriate for WFU due to social, economic, political, or resource constraints. The locations of areas that are suitable/not suitable for WFU are shown in Figure 2-1. Appendix D identifies the specific suitable/not suitable acres by field office.

2.4.5.5 Treatment Levels

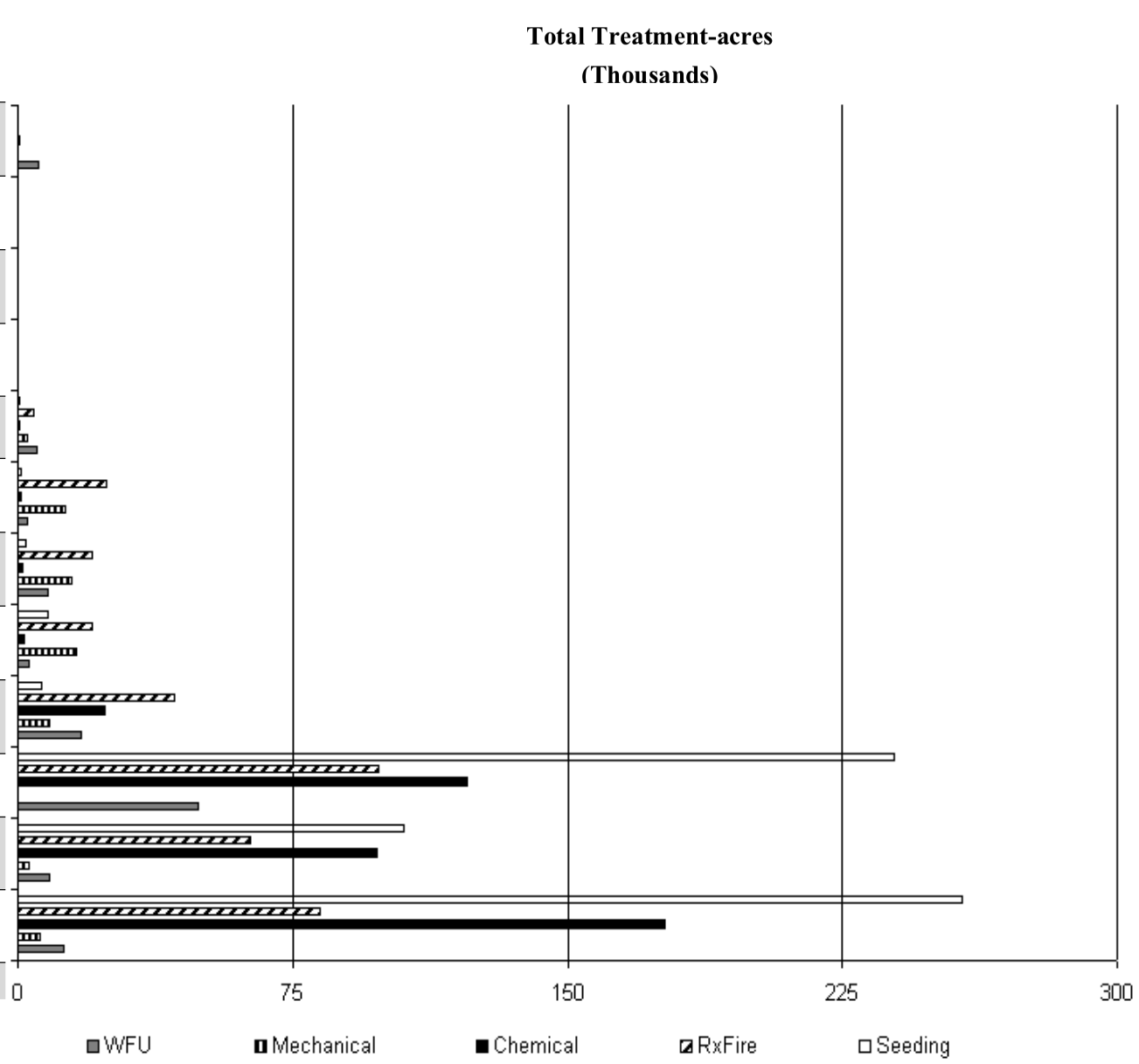
To implement Alternative B, 646,000 footprint-acres would be treated over a 10-year period. Table 2-3 identifies the vegetation type/acres and footprint-acres and graphically illustrates the broad treatment levels (treatment-acres) for the various treatment methods (i.e., WFU, mechanical and chemical treatment, RxFire, and seeding).

2.4.5.6 Fire Management Restrictions

Alternative B would have identical fire management restrictions to those common to all alternatives previously described under Section 2.4.3.3, Fire Management Restrictions.

TABLE 2-3. VEGETATION TYPE AND ACRES, FOOTPRINT-ACRES, AND 10-YEAR TOTAL TREATMENT-ACRES BY TREATMENT TYPE, ALTERNATIVE B

Vegetation Type	Vegetation Acres	Footprint-acres
Vegetated Rock/ Lava	582,057	5,800
Salt Desert Shrub	37,792	0
Riparian	30,903	0
Wet/Cold Conifer	24,965	0
Mountain Shrub	339,815	22,200
Aspen/Conifer	56,290	14,400
Dry Conifer	88,768	16,300
Juniper	90,966	30,400
Mid-elevation Shrub	848,782	94,400
Annual Grass	330,581	127,300
Perennial Grass	1,436,031	134,000
Low-elevation Shrub	1,531,220	201,200
Total Footprint		**646,000**



2.4.6 ALTERNATIVE C

This alternative was designed to address Issue 1 (found in Section 1.4.1, Issues Driving Development of Alternatives): the Cohesive Strategy and the 10-year Comprehensive Strategy. The goals of the Cohesive Strategy and 10-year Comprehensive Strategy include:

1. Improve fire prevention and suppression.
2. Reduce hazardous fuels.
3. Restore fire-adapted ecosystems.
4. Promote community assistance.

Treatment levels, treatment locations, and priorities were developed with these goals in mind.

The emphasis of Alternative C is the replication of historical disturbance patterns and succession patterns for the District's 12 vegetation types via use of fire, mechanical and chemical treatments, and adopting the goals and priorities set in the Cohesive Strategy. About 2.1 million acres are considered suitable for wildland fire use (WFU) under this alternative (see Figure 2-2). These areas were designated by field office personnel in Aspen/Conifer, Dry Conifer, Juniper, Mid-elevation Shrub, Mountain Shrub, Vegetated Rock/Lava, and Wet/Cold Conifer vegetation cover types in which it was determined that WFU could benefit resources and help attain management goals.

In general, WFU would not be used where there are critical wildlife habitats, past rehabilitation treatments, small tracts of BLM-administered land, or public health and safety concerns. Alternative C would also increase RxFire in vegetation types that historically have had more fire disturbance: Mid-elevation Shrub, Dry Conifer, Aspen/Conifer, and Mountain Shrub. This alternative also proposes to decrease the occurrence of wildland fire in the Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass, and Annual Grass cover types using aggressive, proactive restoration and post-fire rehabilitation of areas dominated by exotic annual grasses. Approximately 91 percent of the footprint-acres of these vegetation types would be restored and approximately 9 percent of their footprint-acres would be rehabilitated.

Over a 10-year period, under this alternative, up to approximately 1,686,600 footprint-acres would be treated (approximately seven times the acreage in Alternative A).

Alternative C differs from Alternative B in two major ways: 1) Alternative C would treat all cover types to a level that returns the fire regime to the range of historical variability, and 2) Alternative C would not be limited by existing operations capabilities and resources.

2.4.6.1 Assumptions

- Historical disturbance patterns and successional patterns can be replicated via the application of vegetation treatments.
- Treatment levels would be maintained at the same rate as the historical fire rotation for each vegetation type (i.e., the acreage treated over 10 years corresponding to the burned acreage expected over 10 years under historical conditions).

- After 10 to 15 years of treatment, wildland fires would burn less frequently and would burn smaller acreages than they currently do in Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass, and Annual Grass cover types. This shift would be due to:

More proactive restoration in areas dominated by exotic annual species.

More ES&R treatments following wildland fire in areas invaded and/or dominated by exotic annual species.

Strategic placement of restoration treatments to protect Low-elevation Shrub cover types.

2.4.6.2 Goals/Objectives and Management Actions

1. Make progress towards DFC in Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass, and Annual Grass vegetation types so that wildland fire occurs less frequently and at a smaller scale on the landscape than it currently does. Reduce by half the number of wildland fires in these vegetation types to create a wildland fire regime within the historical range of variability.

Management Actions

RxFire may be used to prepare areas for chemical, mechanical, and/or seeding treatments, or, if needed, for disposal of vegetation or accumulated litter.

Strategically place treatments on a landscape scale to prevent fire from spreading toward or from Wildland Urban Interface areas, Low-elevation Shrub cover types, or other resources at risk, using the entire array of mechanical, chemical, and small-scale RxFire operations to thin, reduce, and control hazardous fuels.

2. Make progress towards DFC in the Mid-elevation Shrub, Juniper, Dry Conifer, Aspen/Conifer, and Mountain Shrub vegetation types by increasing WFU and RxFire to create a fire regime within the historical range of variability.

Management Actions

Use mechanical and chemical treatments to prepare areas in FRCC 2 and FRCC 3 for RxFire and WFU.

Where prescriptive parameters, resource conditions, and vegetation conditions allow, utilize WFU or RxFire to increase the annual average number of wildland fire acres to an average similar to historical conditions. Site-specific NEPA analysis would be completed prior to implementation.

3. In Wet/Cold Conifer, Riparian, Salt Desert Shrub, and Vegetated Rock/Lava vegetation types and/or areas in FRCC 1, maintain vegetation conditions using mechanical, chemical, RxFire, or WFU treatments, such that wildland fire regimes are within the historical range of variability (i.e., maintain the current fire regime in these vegetation types).

Management Action

Use treatments, as appropriate, to maintain landscapes in FRCC 1.

2.4.6.3 Prioritization Criteria

When multiple wildland fire ignitions occur, the suppression priorities are:

1. Protect the Wildland Urban Interface and communities-at-risk, where public and fire-fighter health and safety are a concern.
2. Minimize risks to Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass, and Annual Grass vegetation types, where large fires typically occur.
3. Minimize risks to other vegetation types, where changes in fuel accumulation and fire occurrence have occurred (i.e., FRCC 2 and FRCC 3 areas).

Criteria for establishing vegetation treatments are:

1. Landscape-scale projects designed to reduce the *combined* risk to human life/property and resources (e.g., where Wildland Urban Interface and ecosystems at risk coincide).
2. Projects designed through interagency planning performed at the landscape level in conjunction with active community participation and development of stakeholder partnerships in the planning and monitoring processes.

2.4.6.4 Wildland Fire Use (WFU) Areas

Alternative C would provide the most treatment options and would treat at a level necessary to return the District to FRCC 1 while addressing specific resource management concerns.

Approximately 2,103,100 acres across the District would be identified as suitable for WFU for resource benefit, and approximately 3,297,900 acres would be identified as not suitable/ appropriate due to social, economic, political, or resource constraints. The locations of areas that are not suitable for WFU are shown in Figure 2-2. Appendix D identifies the specific suitable/not suitable acres by field office.

2.4.6.5 Treatment Levels

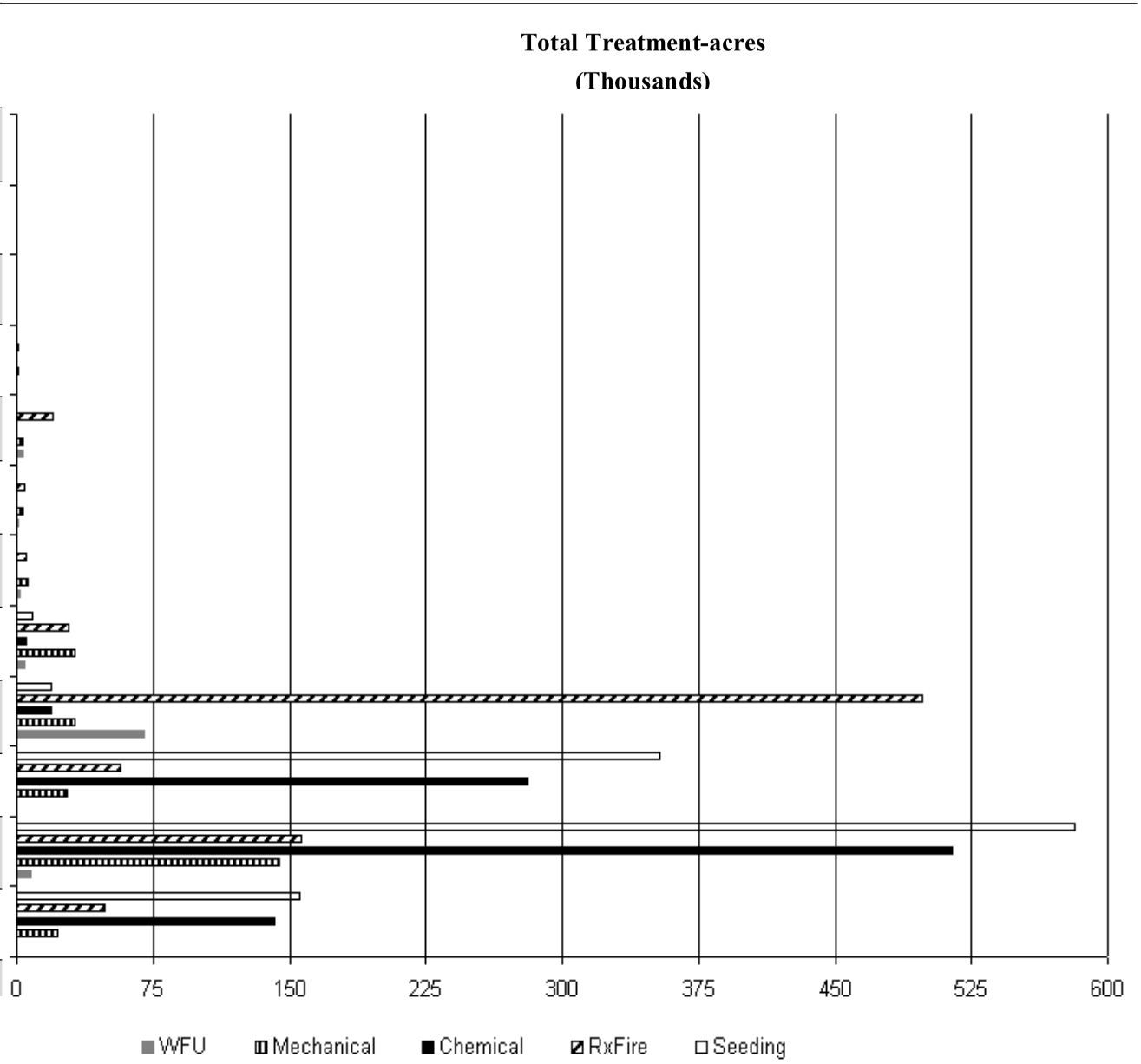
To implement Alternative C, 1,686,500 footprint-acres would be treated over a 10-year period. Table 2-4 identifies the vegetation type/acres and footprint-acres and graphically illustrates the broad treatment levels (treatment-acres) for the various treatment methods (i.e., WFU, mechanical and chemical treatment, RxFire, and seeding).

2.4.6.6 Fire Management Restrictions

Alternative C would have identical fire management restrictions to those common to all alternatives previously described under Section 2.4.3.3, Fire Management Restrictions.

TABLE 2-4. VEGETATION TYPE AND ACRES, FOOTPRINT-ACRES, AND 10-YEAR TOTAL TREATMENT-ACRES BY TREATMENT TYPE, ALTERNATIVE C

Vegetation Type	Vegetation Acres	Footprint-acres
Vegetated Rock/ Lava	582,057	4,000
Salt Desert Shrub	37,792	0
Riparian	30,903	600
Wet/Cold Conifer	24,965	2,000
Mountain Shrub	339,815	29,900
Aspen/Conifer	56,290	5,500
Dry Conifer	88,768	8,300
Juniper	90,966	60,500
Mid-elevation Shrub	848,782	569,800
Annual Grass	330,581	330,500
Perennial Grass	1,436,031	528,400
Low-elevation Shrub	1,531,220	147,000
Total Footprint		**1,686,500**



2.4.7 ALTERNATIVE D – THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

This alternative was designed to address Issue 2 (found in Section 1.4.1, Issues Driving Development of Alternatives). This alternative recognizes that the sagebrush steppe ecosystem and its associated wildlife species, including sage grouse, are at risk from increased wildland fire and other disturbances. The emphasis of this alternative is to maintain existing, high-quality sagebrush steppe habitat and to increase the quantity of resilient sagebrush steppe via post-wildland fire rehabilitation and proactive restoration. Restoration would be emphasized (approximately 89 percent of footprint-acres), and rehabilitation would be conducted as needed (approximately 11 percent of footprint-acres).

Under this alternative, wildland fire suppression efforts would emphasize protection of sagebrush steppe habitats. About 430,000 acres are considered suitable for wildland fire use (WFU) under this alternative; see Figure 2-2. These areas were designated by field office personnel where it was determined that WFU would benefit resources and help attain management goals in Juniper and Mountain Shrub vegetation cover types. The acres mapped as suitable for WFU in Figure 2-2 do not include areas where WFU may be found to be suitable for improving sage grouse habitats. WFU may be allowed in sage grouse Restoration (R1-3), Key, and Source Habitat for the benefit of the habitat (see Figure 3-3) only after site-specific project level consultation/ collaboration with IDFG (see Glossary for definitions of Restoration (R1-3), Key, and Source Habitats).

Vegetation treatments would focus on the Low- and Mid-elevation Shrub, Annual Grass, Perennial Grass, and Mountain Shrub cover types, as well as sagebrush steppe invaded by juniper. Mechanical, chemical, and seeding treatments would be emphasized. RxFire would be used primarily to prepare areas for seeding and to create mosaics for the improvement or enhancement of sagebrush steppe habitats. Restoration priorities would be identified to enlarge and reconnect sagebrush steppe habitat.

Over a 10-year period, under this alternative, up to approximately 1,522,300 footprint-acres would be treated (approximately six times the acreage in Alternative A). It is assumed that Alternative D would not be limited by existing operations capabilities and resources.

2.4.7.1 Assumptions

- Progress made towards DFC would result in improved sage grouse Source and Key Habitats.
- Managing fuels and fire across the sagebrush steppe landscape to achieve sage grouse habitat objectives would provide habitat for a variety of sagebrush-obligate wildlife species as well as other resource benefits.

- Because of the emphasis of this alternative, no treatments in Dry Conifer, Aspen/Conifer, Salt Desert Shrub, and Wet/Cold Conifer are proposed. However, the overriding priority to protect life and property in and around Wildland Urban Interface areas would necessitate treatment of these types when life and property are threatened.

2.4.7.2 Goals/Objectives and Management Actions

1. Make progress towards DFC in the Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass, Annual Grass, Mid-elevation Shrub, Mountain Shrub, and Juniper vegetation types.

Management Actions

- Use chemical, mechanical, seeding, and RxFire treatments as appropriate to achieve DFC.
- In Perennial Grass, Annual Grass, and juniper-invaded cover types, restore the sagebrush steppe with an aggressive sagebrush seeding effort, utilizing the appropriate sagebrush subspecies for the treatment area.

2. Maintain, protect, and expand sage grouse Source Habitats.

Management Actions

- Suppress wildland fires in Source Habitats (Figure 3-3), except where WFU would benefit habitat.
- WFU may be allowed in sage grouse Source Habitats for the benefit of the habitat only after site-specific project level consultation/collaboration with IDFG (Figure 3-3).
- Conduct vegetation treatments in areas that pose a wildland fire risk to Source Habitats.
- Treat areas within Source Habitats that have low resiliency (i.e., areas characterized by low species diversity, undesirable composition, and dead or decadent sagebrush).

3. Treat sage grouse Key and Restoration Habitats to expand Source Habitats. Improve and maintain sage grouse Restoration (R1-3) and Key Habitats.

Management Actions

- Use appropriate management response to wildland fire in all Restoration and Key Habitats.
- WFU may be allowed in sage grouse Restoration and Key Habitats for the benefit of the habitat only after site-specific project level consultation/collaboration with IDFG (Figure 3-3).
- Conduct vegetation treatments in Restoration and Key Habitats to reduce risk of wildland fire and reconnect Restoration and Key Habitats.
- Treat areas of Restoration and Key Habitats that have low resiliency characterized by low species diversity.

2.4.7.3 Prioritization Criteria

When multiple wildland fire ignitions occur, the criteria for establishing suppression priorities are:

1. Protect the Wildland Urban Interface and communities-at-risk where public and fire-fighter health and safety are a concern.
2. Minimize risks to sage grouse Source Habitats.
3. Minimize risks to sage grouse Key Habitats.
4. Minimize risks to sage grouse Restoration Habitats.

Criteria for establishing vegetation treatments are:

1. Within sage grouse Source Habitat, treat areas of low resilience.
2. Within Key and Restoration Habitat:

Treat areas adjacent to Source Habitat.

Enhance Key Habitat.

Treat areas that pose a fire risk to Source and Key Habitats.

Treat areas adjacent to Key Habitat.

2.4.7.4 Wildland Fire Use (WFU) Areas

Approximately 430,800 acres across the District would be identified as suitable for WFU for resource benefit, and approximately 4,967,400 acres would be identified as not appropriate due to social, economic, political, and resource constraints. The locations of areas that are not appropriate for WFU are shown in Figure 2-2. In order to achieve the sage-grouse habitat objectives of this alternative, there may be localized areas of sage-grouse habitat (Figure 3-3) within the area identified as not appropriate for WFU where prescribed fire is planned that may also be suitable for small-scale WFU if a natural ignition meets the prescribed fire parameters. These areas will be identified on a case-by-case, site-specific basis and are estimated to be less than 1% of the overall prescribed fire acres planned. Appendix D identifies the specific WFU suitable/not appropriate acres by field office.

2.4.7.5 Treatment Levels

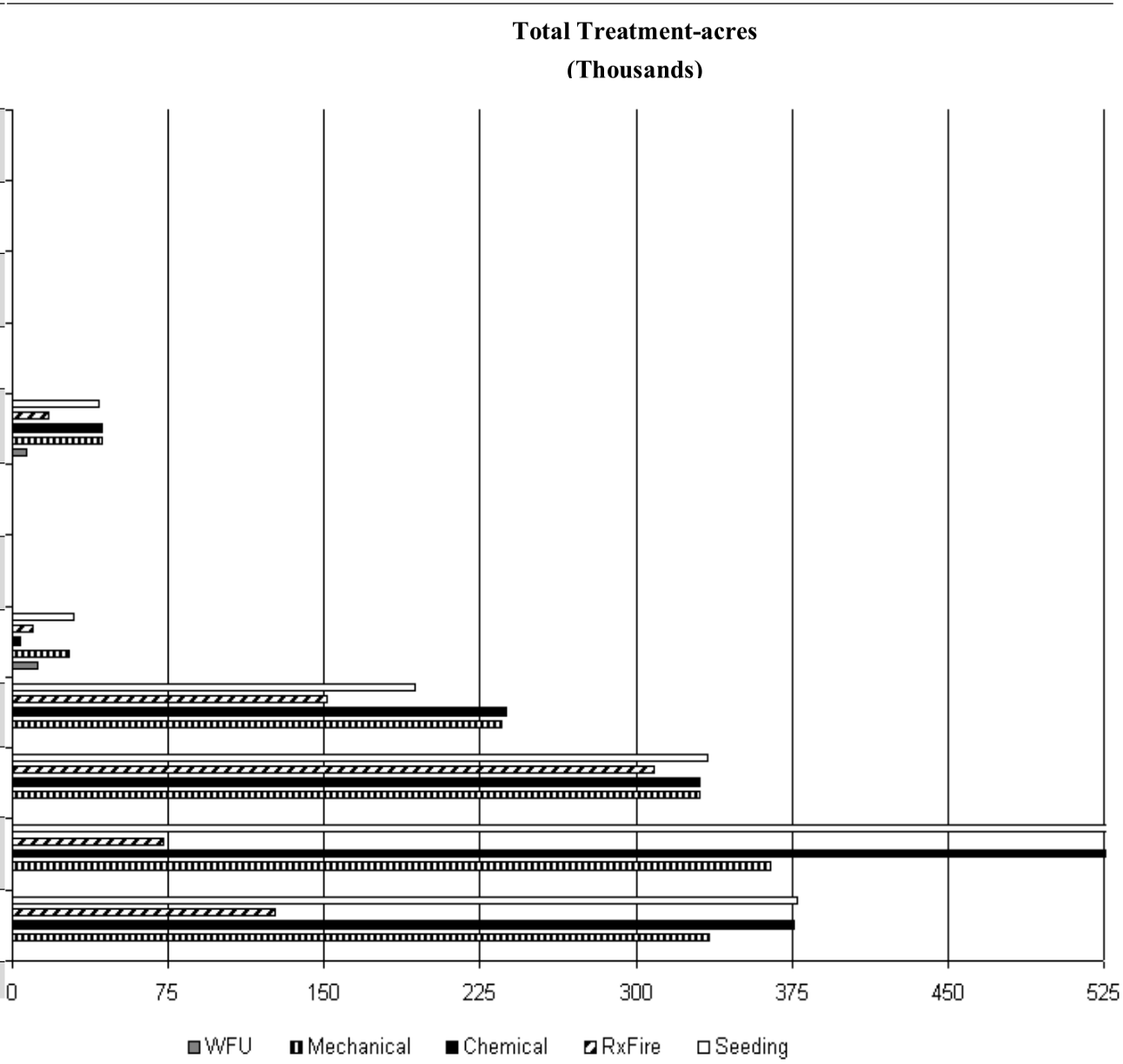
To implement Alternative D, 1,522,300 footprint-acres would be treated over a 10-year period. Table 2-5 identifies the vegetation type/acres and footprint-acres and graphically illustrates the broad treatment levels (treatment-acres) for the various treatment methods (i.e., WFU, mechanical and chemical treatment, RxFire, and seeding).

2.4.7.6 Fire Management Restrictions

Alternative D would have identical fire management restrictions to those common to all alternatives previously described under Section 2.4.3.3, Fire Management Restrictions.

TABLE 2-5. VEGETATION TYPE AND ACRES, FOOTPRINT-ACRES, AND 10-YEAR TOTAL TREATMENT-ACRES BY TREATMENT TYPE, ALTERNATIVE D

Vegetation Type	Vegetation Acres	Footprint-acres
Vegetated Rock/ Lava	582,057	0
Salt Desert Shrub	37,792	0
Riparian	30,903	0
Wet/Cold Conifer	24,965	0
Mountain Shrub	339,815	26,800
Aspen/Conifer	56,290	0
Dry Conifer	88,768	0
Juniper	90,966	29,200
Mid-elevation Shrub	848,782	230,500
Annual Grass	330,581	330,500
Perennial Grass	1,436,031	528,000
Low-elevation Shrub	1,531,220	377,300
Total Footprint		**1,522,300**



2.5 IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING, AND EVALUATION

2.5.1 IMPLEMENTATION

The following discussion of implementation and monitoring applies to all four alternatives presented above. Any part of the alternatives that might be selected as the basis for the proposed amendments would be implemented as described below.

The FMDA analysis is broad and is thus intended to provide broad programmatic direction for the future fire, fuels, and related vegetation management of the Upper Snake River Plain and surrounding lands. The analysis is based upon the best available scientific information and methods. It is not designed for project-level or site-specific decision-making. For these reasons, the following assumptions were made by the planning team during the analysis process and are set forth here to guide the implementation of each amendment.

The acreages that would be treated and described in each alternative are intended to be viewed as scenarios that reflect broad treatment levels for the purposes of comparison of alternatives and effects assessment. Once a broad treatment level is selected, actual projects and acres to be treated would be identified by field office personnel based on site-specific information.

The acres that would be treated by each alternative are not to be viewed as targets but rather as *levels of magnitude* of work that needs to be done. Field office personnel would set treatment priorities based upon their knowledge of the conditions and needs of the land. Site-specific NEPA would be conducted on all fire, fuels, and vegetation management treatments.

On acreages where WFU is deemed suitable, these areas would remain as full suppression areas until analyses and NEPA have been completed. Site-specific plans would identify management goals, objectives and actions for an area that is suitable for WFU. Analysis on the affects of WFU would be completed during the site-specific NEPA process.

Field office and fire management staff would implement plan amendment direction. Field office ID teams, including both fire and resource specialists, would plan and analyze specific projects. The development of each project incorporating WFU would include public involvement and the preparation of a NEPA document for each project to be implemented.

Within the scope of this analysis, the FMDA is designed to allow for adaptive management (see Section 2.5.3, Adaptive Management). Adaptive management would allow project planners the flexibility to respond to changes in resource conditions or as new information becomes available from continued monitoring and evaluation. The assumptions set forth above provide the guidance to focus on needs identified on the ground as they are considered on a project-by-project basis.

2.5.2 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Any part of the above alternatives that might be selected for implementation would have a monitoring component. The monitoring and subsequent management actions that would be undertaken during implementation are generally described below in Section 2.5.3, Adaptive Management.

Accomplishment of project objectives would be determined through the monitoring and evaluation of acres treated, using parameters such as fuel loading, plant frequency, plant cover and species composition. Monitoring would be conducted by field office personnel. Monitoring data would be evaluated at regular intervals.

2.5.3 ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

In the case of natural resource management, adaptive management can act as an early-warning system that facilitates the implementation of corrective management actions intended to repair ecosystem functions and processes. When management actions are achieving expected results, management actions continue unchanged. If new management actions are determined to be ineffective or even counter-productive, adaptive management can redirect management actions to better achieve goals/objectives. Assuming that an ecosystem is healthy, adaptive management can facilitate maintaining ecosystem processes within normal fluctuations of climate and environment. Adaptive management would require reviewing project work more frequently, proposing alternative ways to move forward, and conducting NEPA analysis when a new management decision is needed.

Under adaptive management, planning decisions and implementation actions are based upon real-world information and data. Adaptive management is a cyclic, active feedback process (Figure 2-3) with four important components: 1) Planning, 2) Implementation, 3) Monitoring, and 4) Evaluation. No one component is more important than the others, though information gained through periodic monitoring and evaluation keeps this process cycling. Adaptive management only occurs when all four activities are regularly performed. The constant feedback nature of adaptive management facilitates management flexibility and reduces the chances of missed opportunities.

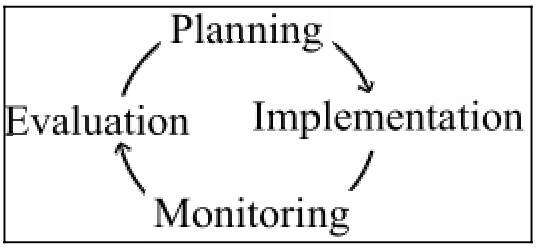


Figure 2-3. Diagram of the adaptive management cycle

Periodic monitoring (data collection) and evaluation (data analysis) are critical to gaining reliable information and data about natural resources, which are critical for rational planning decisions to implement new management actions or maintain present activities.

Adaptive management is a process for continually improving management through monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of management actions, then using these data to direct or change management. Approached in this manner, management actions/activities are treated as working hypotheses, not final solutions to complex ecological problems. Monitoring and evaluation provide continued feedback (information and data), upon which a resource manager can make informed decisions.

For adaptive management to be successful, an effective monitoring program is essential. Such a program needs:

1) To have standardized data collection techniques that are relevant, accurate, and practical;
2) To be adequately supported in terms of personnel and funding; and
3) To analyze, summarize and distribute data to ID teams in a timely manner.

An effective monitoring program keeps resource managers abreast of current conditions and gives them the information/data to adapt management actions/activities to changing resource conditions.

Adaptive fire management activities, for example, might include prioritizing suppression efforts on simultaneous wildland fires, changing wildland fire suppression categories for vegetation types when they burn or when they are revegetated, protecting critical habitats, and/or applying new technologies in fuels reduction, weed control, or revegetation techniques.

2.6 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT ELIMINATED FROM FURTHER ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS

Issues and impacts of concern involving Alternative B were identified through the scoping process. Alternatives to this alternative were then developed to provide several ways of addressing the scoping issues and reducing potential environmental impacts, while still achieving the identified purpose and need of the project. Several alternatives for meeting the project purpose and need were suggested during the scoping process. Many of these alternatives were considered and subsequently eliminated from detailed analysis for various reasons. Descriptions of these alternatives and rationales for their elimination are given below.

The alternative of altering or eliminating grazing practices was suggested in the scoping process. While this is closely tied to vegetation conditions and treatments, it does not, in itself, meet the purpose and need of the proposed project. Therefore, it was not considered further as an alternative. Because Alternative B aims to update existing LUPs with the National Fire Plan and the Federal Wildland Fire Management Policy, grazing management has not been directly incorporated in alternative development, but is instead addressed in the impacts to resources analysis of Chapter 4, Environmental Consequences.

A scoping respondent suggested that the BLM consider an alternative that would use several passive treatments for fire management. These treatments include utilizing livestock grazing to reduce invasive species, reducing livestock usage in areas with known exotic infestations, removal of livestock facilities, and the closing of roads and off-road vehicle trails. This alternative was eliminated from detailed analysis because it involves decisions beyond the scope of the EIS. All of these uses are part of the BLM's multiple-use mandate and elimination of grazing or off-road recreational access is out of the scope of this process and may be addressed during the District field offices' LUP revision process.

A Resource Restoration Emphasis alternative was suggested. This alternative would emphasize the active restoration of rangeland habitats, wetlands, riparian, and aquatic areas. This alternative was eliminated from detailed analysis because it involves elements that are not part of the purpose and need of the project. The project purpose and need involves ES&R and restoration, but only as they relate to fire management. Non-fire related restoration of rangeland, wetlands, riparian and aquatic areas is outside of the scope of this project and this EIS analysis.

2.7 REASONABLY FORESEEABLE FUTURE ACTIONS

As stated in Chapter 1, Purpose and Need, there are several planning efforts going on within the District. These would result in decisions that could have a cumulative impact on resources within the District. The reasonably foreseeable future actions resulting from these planning efforts are described below.

2.7.1 IDAHO NATIONAL ENGINEERING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY (DOE-ID, INEEL)

As stated in Chapter 1, Purpose and Need, the DOE-ID, in conjunction with the District, is preparing a management plan for the SSER. DOE-ID completed the Final *Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory Wildland Fire Management Environmental Assessment* in April 2003. Decisions arising from these planning efforts would be considered in fire management on the INEEL, grazing, the sagebrush steppe cover types, and wildlife.

2.7.2 SAWTOOTH NATIONAL FOREST

The Sawtooth National Forest, which comprises approximately 2.2 million acres in south-central Idaho, and in conjunction with the Boise and Payette National Forests, revised its Forest Plan in July 2003. Part of this revision process included the designation of acres of land that would be treated with fire to reach forest management objectives. These objectives include: (1) treating fuels to reduce the risk of wildland fire; (2) treating fuels to achieve a desired vegetation conditions; (3) treatment of fuels generated from management activities; and (4) habitat improvement. Reasonably foreseeable fire management projects on the Sawtooth National Forest include at least 40,000 acres of fuels management over the next decade, focusing on the Wildland Urban Interface areas. These fuels management treatments would use a combination of fire and mechanical treatments to reduce fuels and restore and maintain forested vegetation types.

2.7.3 CARIBOU AND TARGHEE NATIONAL FORESTS

Reasonably foreseeable fire management projects on the Targhee National Forest include approximately 2,000 acres per year of fuels reduction, as per the 1997 Forest Plan. These reductions would occur through both fire and mechanical treatments (USFS 2003a).

The Caribou National Forest completed its Forest Plan in February 2003. The fuels treatment goal in the new plan is 7,000 to 7,500 acres per year. The plan states the 10-year annual average fuels treatment would be: (1) 3,500 acres of fire and mechanical treatment in forested habitat, and (2) 4,000 acres of fire and mechanical treatments in non-forested habitat.

Of the 3,500 acres of forested habitat treated, 1,375 acres would be within the Wildland Urban Interface, and 2,150 acres would be outside the Wildland Urban Interface. The majority of the area within the Wildland Urban Interface would be treated by mechanical methods and outside the Wildland Urban Interface would be treated primarily with RxFire (USFS 2003a).

Although the combined treatment goal for the Caribou and Targhee National Forests is approximately 9,000 acres, the average combined acreage treated over the past several years has been 2,500 to 3,000. Approximately 39 percent (975 to 1,170 acres) has been in the Wildland Urban Interface, and approximately 61 percent (1,525 to 1,830 acres) has been outside the Wildland Urban Interface. Accordingly, future treatments in the Wildland Urban Interface would be approximately triple of past treatments. It is likely that both forests would continue a trend towards additional treatments within the Wildland Urban Interface, as well as additional mechanical treatments overall (USFS 2003a).

2.7.4 IDAHO DEPARTMENT OF LANDS (IDL)

In May 2002, the IDL, in conjunction with the BLM and other federal agencies, signed the Idaho Statewide Implementation Strategy for the National Fire Plan. The implementation plan focuses on fire preventions and suppression, hazardous fuels reduction, restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems, and the promotion of community assistance in fire management. The strategy emphasizes a collaborative approach at the county level, encouraging the development of county risk assessments and mitigation plans with assistance from state and federal agencies. Counties are encouraged to identify fire management priorities quickly and to begin whatever actions are necessary to mitigate potential risks or vulnerabilities (IDL 2002a). During 2002, IDL, in cooperation with federal agencies, disbursed $1.9 million to Wildland Urban Interface projects and development of defensible space. Additional money was used for hazardous fuels reduction programs for several communities, including Island Park, Idaho (IDL 2002b). The development of risk assessments and mitigation plans would allow counties and communities within the District to determine their current fire hazard risk and to develop effective mitigation to minimize wildland urban risks to persons and property. Additionally, implementation of community-based fuels reduction programs provides opportunities for private landowners to work with federal land management agencies to manage the Wildland Urban Interface.

2.7.5 SHOSHONE-BANNOCK TRIBES

The Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and Bureau of Indian Affairs at Fort Hall, Idaho are planning a number of projects that will reduce hazardous fuels and reduce fire risks in the Wildland Urban Interface. These projects include Wildland Urban Interface actions at Michaud Flat (26 acres of mechanical treatment), Bannock Creek (100 acres, half mechanical and half RxFire), and Ross Fork Creek. There are also proposed hazardous fuels reduction projects for Mount Putnam (150 acres that would be mechanically treated and then RxFire treated) and the Fort Hall Bottoms (130 acres of RxFire).

2.8 SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES AND EFFECTS

A summary of alternative elements is provided in Table 2-6. Table 2-7 summarizes impacts to resources and uses.

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES A THROUGH D				
Alternative Elements	**Alternative A**	**Alternative B**	**Alternative C**	**Alternative D**
Management Goals/Objectives	**Objective 1:** Emphasize protection from and rehabilitation after wildland fire within the WUI. **Objective 2:** Reduce fine fuels and invasive exotic plants to create perennial cover types so that wildland fire occurs less frequently than currently and at a smaller scale on the landscape. **Objective 3:** Conduct fire and non-fire vegetation treatments in Mid-elevation Shrub, Juniper, Dry Conifer, Aspen/Conifer, and Mountain Shrub.	**Objective 1:** Make progress towards DFC in Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass, and Annual Grass cover types where wildland fire should be occurring less frequently than currently and at a smaller scale on the landscape. **Objective 2:** Make progress towards DFC in the Mid-elevation Shrub, Juniper, Dry Conifer, Aspen/Conifer, and Mountain Shrub cover types where wildland fire should be occurring more frequently than currently on the landscape. **Objective 3:** Maintain or make progress towards DFC in the Wet/Cold Conifer, Salt Desert Shrub and cover types where fire frequencies are within the historical range of variability.	**Objective 1:** Make progress towards DFC in Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass, and Annual Grass cover types so that wildland fire occurs less frequently than currently and at a smaller scale on the landscape. Reduce by half the number of wildland fires in these cover types to create a wildland fire regime within the historical range of variability. **Objective 2:** Make progress towards DFC in the Mid-elevation Shrub, Juniper, Dry Conifer, Aspen/Conifer, and Mountain Shrub cover types by increasing WFU and RxFire to create a fire regime within the historical range of variability. **Objective 3:** In Wet/Cold Conifer, Riparian, Salt Desert Shrub, and Vegetated Rock/Lava cover types and/or areas in FRCC 1, maintain vegetation conditions using mechanical, chemical, RxFire, or WFU treatments, such that wildland fire regimes are within the historical range of variability. (i.e., maintain the current level of fire in these	**Objective 1:** Make progress towards DFC in the Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass, Annual Grass, Mid-elevation Shrub, Mountain Shrub and Juniper cover types. **Objective 2:** Maintain, protect and expand sage grouse Source Habitats. **Objective 3:** Maintain and improve sage grouse Restoration and Key Habitats.

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES A THROUGH D				
			cover types).	
Suppression and Treatment Priorities	Common to All: Public and firefighter safety is the first priority in all fire suppression and treatments. Protect the WUI and communities-at-risk where public and firefighter health and safety are a concern.			
	Suppression Priorities: Low-and Mid-elevation Shrub cover types unless life or property are at risk. Resource priorities would be reviewed annually. **Treatment Priorities:** 1) In areas dominated by cheatgrass, conduct wildland fire rehabilitation or proactive restoration. 2) Accomplish resource related objectives.	**Suppression Priorities:** Sagebrush steppe, and Dry Conifer **Treatment Priorities:** Sagebrush steppe protection/maintenance. Prioritize treatment to areas that are adjacent to existing sagebrush cover types. Sagebrush steppe restoration Aspen/Conifer, Mountain Shrub, Dry Conifer restoration Areas that are at high risk of loss of key ecosystem components.	**Suppression Priorities:** Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass, and Annual Grass cover types where large fires typically occur. FRCC 2 and FRCC 3 areas **Treatment Priorities:** Landscape-level projects where projects designed to reduce the COMBINED risk to human life/property and resources; projects planned in conjunction with active community participation and the development of partnerships with stakeholders.	**Suppression Priorities:** Source, Key, and Restoration (R1-R3) sage grouse habitat. **Treatment Priorities:** Within sage grouse Source Habitat, treat areas of low resilience. Within Key and Restoration Habitat: 1) Treat areas adjacent to Source Habitat, 2) Enhance Key Habitat, 3) Treat areas that pose a fire risk to Source and Key Habitats, 4) Treat areas adjacent to Key Habitat.
Wildland Fire Use (WFU) Areas	**WFU:** 0 acres **No WFU** 5,398,200 acres	**WFU:** 3,332,800 acres **No WFU:** 2,065,400 acres	**WFU:** 2,102,400 acres **No WFU:** 3,295,800 acres	**WFU:** 430,800 acres **No WFU:** 4,967,400 acres
Broad Treatment Levels (10-year planning period)	**Footprint:** 250,200 acres **WFU:** 0 acres **RxFire:** 36,600 acres **Non-Fire Vegetation Treatments:** 490,400 acres **Post-Fire Rehabilitation:** 52% of Footprint-acres	**Footprint:** 646,000 acres **WFU:** 112,200 acres **RxFire:** 356,000 acres **Non-Fire Vegetation Treatments:** 1,111,000 acres **Post-Fire Rehabilitation:** 20% of Footprint-acres	**Footprint:** 1,686,500 acres **WFU:** 129,500 acres **RxFire:** 1,034,600 acres **Non-Fire Vegetation Treatments:** 2,289,600 acres **Post-Fire Rehabilitation:** 8% of Footprint-acres	**Footprint:** 1,522,300 acres **WFU:** 14,800 acres **RxFire:** 676,500 acres **Non-Fire Vegetation Treatments:** 4,318,000 acres **Post-Fire Rehabilitation:** 12% of Footprint-acres

TABLE 2-6. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVES A THROUGH D

	Proactive Restoration: 48% of Footprint-acres	**Proactive Restoration:** 80% of Footprint-acres	**Proactive Restoration:** 92% of Footprint-acres	**Proactive Restoration:** 88% of Footprint-acres
Fire Management Restrictions	This alternative would include all restrictions described under Section 2.4.3.3, Fire Management Restrictions. Additionally, it would include all management restrictions in current District LUPs.	Described under Section 2.4.3.3, Fire Management Restrictions.	Described under Section 2.4.3.3, Fire Management Restrictions.	Described under Section 2.4.3.3, Fire Management Restrictions.

TABLE 2-7. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE EFFECTS

Vegetation – Cohesive Strategy (Issue 1): Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) by alternative at 30 years in respective field offices.

Vegetation Cover Types	**Field Offices**															
	Idaho Falls				**Pocatello**				**Burley**				**Shoshone**			
	A	**B**	**C**	**D**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**
LES[1], Perennial, Annual	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	2	2	2
MES[2], Juniper	3	2	1	2	3	3	1	2	3	2	1	2	3	3	1	2
Mountain Shrub	3	2	1	3	3	1	1	1	3	2	1	2	3	2	1	2
Aspen/Conifer, Dry Conifer	2	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	1	3	3	2	2	3
Salt Desert Shrub	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	NA3	NA	NA	NA
Vegetated Rock/Lava	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Wet/Cold Conifer	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2

Notes:

FRCC 1 = low risk of losing key ecosystem components; FRCC 3 = high risk of losing key ecosystem components.

There are no treatments proposed for the Riparian cover type in any of the four alternatives. However, they may receive some treatment depending on the needs of the adjacent cover types.

[1] LES = Low-elevation Shrub

[2] MES = Mid-elevation Shrub

[3] Not Applicable (NA): Shoshone has no vegetation mapped as Salt Desert Shrub.

TABLE 2-7. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE EFFECTS (CONTINUED)

Vegetation – Cohesive Strategy (Issue 1): District Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) by alternative at 30 years.

Vegetation Cover Types	Alternatives			
	A	B	C	D
Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial, Annual	2-3	2	2	2
Mid-elevation Shrub, Juniper	3	2-3	1	2
Mountain Shrub	3	1-2	1	1-3
Aspen/Conifer, Dry Conifer	2-3	2-3	1-2	3
Salt Desert Shrub	1	1	1	1
Vegetated Rock/Lava	1	1	1	1
Wet/Cold Conifer	2	2	1-2	2

Notes:

FRCC 1 = low risk of losing key ecosystem components; FRCC 3 = high risk of losing key ecosystem components.

There are no treatments proposed for the Riparian cover type in any of the four alternatives. However, they may receive some treatment depending on the needs of the adjacent cover types.

TABLE 2-7. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE EFFECTS (CONTINUED)

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Sagebrush Wildlife Guild Habitats (Issue 2)	Under all alternatives, the proportion of Source Habitat that would be disturbed by vegetation treatments indicates habitat loss over the short term for the Sagebrush Guild. The percentage of mature, Low-elevation Shrub at 30-years old, or more, provides an assessment of long-term benefits to the Sagebrush Guild.			
	Idaho Falls Field Office: Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 0% Mature shrub at 30 years: ..... 37% **Pocatello Field Office:** Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 0% Mature shrub at 30 years: ..... 20% **Burley Field Office:** Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 0% Mature shrub at 30 years: ..... 12% **Shoshone Field Office:** Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 0% Mature shrub at 30 years: 12%	**Idaho Falls Field Office:** Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 6.9% Mature shrub at 30 years: ..... 28.0% **Pocatello Field Office:** Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 0.0% Mature shrub at 30 years: ..... 20.0% **Burley Field Office:** Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 2.6% Mature shrub at 30 years: ..... 15.0% **Shoshone Field Office:** Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 0.0% Mature shrub at 30 years: 14.0%	**Idaho Falls Field Office:** Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 7.7% Mature shrub at 30 years: ..... 40.0% **Pocatello Field Office:** Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 23.5% Mature shrub at 30 years: ..... 22.0% **Burley Field Office:** Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 13.7% Mature shrub at 30 years: ..... 21.0% **Shoshone Field Office:** Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 2.3% Mature shrub at 30 years: 24.0%	**Idaho Falls Field Office:** Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 9.9% Mature shrub at 30 years: ..... 41.0% **Pocatello Field Office:** Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 15.7% Mature shrub at 30 years: ..... 25.0% **Burley Field Office:** Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 12.4% Mature shrub at 30 years: ..... 21.0% **Shoshone Field Office:** Source Habitat disturbed in first 10 years: ..... 8.5% Mature shrub at 30 years: 17.0%

TABLE 2-7. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE EFFECTS (CONTINUED)

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) Areas of Concern	Low Risk: ..... 15 areas Moderate Risk:..... 15 areas High Risk:..... 4 areas Least amount of treatment in, and adjacent to, the WUI areas would result in: - Continued full-scale suppression as the primary tool in reacting to wildland fires, - Continued wildland fire damage to property, - Increased financial and labor costs, and - Risk to public and fire-fighter health and safety.	Low Risk:..... 27 areas Moderate Risk:..... 6 areas High Risk:..... 1 area Those WUI areas that receive the most treatments would result in cover types that: - Are more resilient to wildland fire, - Have reduced fuel loads, and, therefore, fire intensity, and - Pose less risk to WUI areas. If treatment involves WFU and RxFire, there would be some risk to the public and fighter health and safety, though it would be expected that the effects of treatment would reduce the incidence of catastrophic wildland fire by reducing fuel load, increasing defensible space, and restoring cover types where feasible.	Low Risk: ..... 29 areas Moderate Risk:..... 5 areas High Risk:..... 0 areas Same as Alternative B.	Low Risk: .....29 areas Moderate Risk:.....4 areas High Risk:..... 1 area Similar to Alternative B with the exception that Alternative D focuses on Low- and Mid-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass, and Annual Grass cover types.
Wildlife	- 250,200 footprint-acres under this alternative would be unavailable to wildlife for portions of the following 10 years. However, areas being rehabilitated or	- 646,000 footprint-acres under this alternative would be unavailable to wildlife for portions of the following 10 years. However, areas being rehabilitated or	- 1,686,600 footprint-acres under this alternative would be unavailable to wildlife for portions of the following 10 years. However, areas being rehabilitated or	- 1,522,400 footprint-acres under this alternative would be unavailable to wildlife for portions of the following 10 years. However, areas being rehabilitated or

TABLE 2-7. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE EFFECTS (CONTINUED)

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
	restored would continue to provide habitat value to certain species, particularly those that utilize early to mid-seral stages. - FRCC in Annual Grass, Perennial Grass and Low-Elevation Shrub would remain at 2, with corresponding moderate risk to wildlife guilds using these cover types. - Mid-elevation Shrub, Juniper, and Mountain Shrub would remain in FRCC 3 with higher risk of long-term adverse impacts to wildlife guilds using these cover types. - Aspen/Conifer and Dry Conifer FRCC would vary from 2 to 3 throughout the District with corresponding moderate-to- high risk to wildlife habitat in these cover types. - Salt Desert Shrub, Riparian, and Vegetated Rock/Lava would remain in FRCC 1 with low risk to wildlife species using these cover types.	restored would continue to provide habitat value to certain species, particularly those that utilize early to mid-seral stages. -FRCC in Annual Grass, Perennial Grass and Low-elevation Shrub would remain at 2, with corresponding moderate risk to wildlife guilds using these cover types. - Mid-elevation Shrub and Juniper would range from 2 to 3 across the District with moderate and high risk to species using these cover types. - Mountain Shrub would range from FRCC 2 to 1 across the District with moderate-to-low risk to species using this cover type. - Aspen/Conifer and Dry Conifer FRCC would be 2 throughout the District with corresponding moderate risk to wildlife habitat in these cover types. - Salt Desert Shrub, Riparian, and Vegetated Rock/Lava would remain in FRCC 1 with low risk to	restored would continue to provide habitat value to certain species, particularly those that utilize early to mid-seral stages. -FRCC in Annual Grass, Perennial Grass and Low-elevation Shrub would remain at 2, with corresponding moderate risk to wildlife guilds using these cover types. - Mid-elevation Shrub and Juniper would be FRCC 1 across the District with low risk to species using these cover types. - Mountain Shrub FRCC would range from 3 to 1 with low-to-moderate risk to species using this cover type. - Aspen/Conifer and Dry Conifer FRCC would be 2 to 3 throughout the District with corresponding moderate-to-high risk to wildlife species in these cover types. - Salt Desert Shrub, Riparian, and Vegetated Rock/Lava would remain in FRCC 1 with low risk to wildlife species using these cover types.	restored would continue to provide habitat value to certain species, particularly those that utilize early to mid-seral stages. - FRCC in Annual Grass, Perennial Grass and Low-elevation Shrub would remain at 2, with corresponding moderate risk to wildlife species using these cover types. - Mid-elevation Shrub and Juniper would have an FRCC of 2 across the District with moderate risk to species using these cover types. - Mountain Shrub FRCC would range from 2 to 3 with moderate-to-high risk to species using this cover type. - Aspen/Conifer and Dry Conifer FRCC would be 3 throughout the District with corresponding high risk to wildlife species in these cover types. - Salt Desert Shrub, Riparian, and Vegetated Rock/Lava would remain in FRCC 1 with low risk to wildlife species using these

TABLE 2-7. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE EFFECTS (CONTINUED)

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
		wildlife species using these cover types.		cover types.
Special Status Plants	Under all alternatives, site-specific project effects on special status plants would be evaluated in light of the status of the taxa, population health and integrity, ecology and response to disturbance, and habitat quality.			
	Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass, Annual Grass: - Would treat approximately **6%** of cover types to benefit special status plant habitat by reestablishing the structure, species composition, and seral dynamics of the native cover type. - RxFire on approximately 14,000 acres would benefit species that require open light and openings in early to mid-seral stages. Species characteristic of late seral stages would possibly be less tolerant of burning treatments due to shading or nutrient requirements.	*Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass, Annual Grass:* - Would treat approximately **12%** of cover types to benefit special status plant habitat by reestablishing the structure, species composition, and seral dynamics of the native cover type. - WFU and RxFire on approximately 320,000 acres would benefit species that require open light and openings in early to mid-seral stages. Species characteristic of late seral stages would possibly be less tolerant of burning treatments due to shading or nutrient requirements.	*Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass, Annual Grass:* - Would treat approximately **37%** of cover types to benefit special status plant habitat by reestablishing the structure, species composition, and seral dynamics of the native cover type. - WFU and RxFire on approximately 258,000 acres would benefit species that require open light and openings in early to mid-seral stages. Species characteristic of late seral stages would possibly be less tolerant of burning treatments due to shading or nutrient requirements.	*Low-elevation Shrub, Perennial Grass, Annual Grass:* - Would treat approximately **30%** of cover types to benefit special status plant habitat by reestablishing the structure, species composition, and seral dynamics of the native cover type. - RxFire on approximately 500,000 acres would benefit species that require open light and openings in early to mid-seral stages. Species characteristic of late seral stages would possibly be less tolerant of burning treatments due to shading or nutrient requirements.
	Mid-elevation Shrub, Juniper, including areas of juniper encroachment: - Special status species that occur on relatively fire-resistant, sparsely	*Mid-elevation Shrub, Juniper, including areas of juniper encroachment:* - Same as Alternative A.	*Mid-elevation Shrub, Juniper, including areas of juniper encroachment:* - Same as Alternative A.	*Mid-elevation Shrub, Juniper, including areas of juniper encroachment:* - Same as Alternative A.

TABLE 2-7. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE EFFECTS (CONTINUED)

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
	vegetated, rocky sites would not be impacted.			
	- Would treat approximately **3%** of cover types with benefits dependent upon seral stage status and tolerance to fire, as well as competitive ability and shade tolerance. Potential negative long-term effects would be due to lack of treatment and continued degradation of habitat.	- Would treat approximately **15%** of cover types with benefits dependent upon seral stage status and tolerance to fire, as well as competitive ability and shade tolerance. Potential negative long-term effects would be due to lack of treatment and continued degradation of habitat.	- Would treat approximately **50%** of cover types with benefits dependent upon seral stage status and tolerance to fire, as well as competitive ability and shade tolerance. Potential positive effects would be due to maintaining a seral community/or expanding potential habitat on a landscape scale.	- Would treat approximately **28%** of cover types with benefits dependent upon seral status and tolerance to fire, as well as competitive ability and shade tolerance. Potential positive effects would be due to maintaining a seral community/or expanding potential habitat on a landscape scale.
	Salt Desert Shrub: - Would treat approximately **3%** of cover type. Unlikely that treatments would impact any special status plant populations.	*Salt Desert Shrub:* - No treatment proposed. Unlikely to impact any special status plant populations.	*Salt Desert Shrub:* - Same as Alternative B.	*Salt Desert Shrub:* - Same as Alternative B.
	Aspen/Conifer and Dry Conifer: - Would treat approximately **3%** of cover types with benefits dependent upon the seral stage status, tolerance to fire, competitive ability, and shade tolerance.	Aspen/Conifer and Dry Conifer: - Would treat approximately **21%** of cover types with benefits dependent upon the seral stage status, tolerance to fire, competitive ability, and shade tolerance.	Aspen/Conifer and Dry Conifer: - Would treat approximately **14%** of cover types with benefits dependent upon the seral stage status, tolerance to fire, competitive ability, and shade tolerance.	Aspen/Conifer and Dry Conifer: - No treatment proposed. Unlikely to impact any special status plant populations though may indirectly impact special status species that require openings in the Aspen vegetation cover type.

TABLE 2-7. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE EFFECTS (CONTINUED)

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
	Mountain Shrub: - Would treat approximately < **1%** of cover type with benefits dependent upon seral stage status, tolerance to fire, competitive ability, and shade tolerance. Potential negative long-term effects would be due to lack of treatment and continued degradation of habitat.	Mountain Shrub: - Would treat approximately **9%** of cover type with benefits dependent upon seral stage status, tolerance to fire, competitive ability, and shade tolerance. Potential negative long-term effects would be due to lack of treatment and continued degradation of habitat.	Mountain Shrub: - Would treat approximately **42%** of cover type with benefits dependent upon seral stage status, tolerance to fire, competitive ability, and shade tolerance. Potential positive effects would be due to maintaining a seral stage and/or expanding potential habitat on a landscape scale.	Mountain Shrub: - Would treat approximately **13%** of cover type with benefits dependent upon seral stage status, tolerance to fire, competitive ability, and shade tolerance. Potential positive effects would be due to maintaining a seral stage and/or expanding potential habitat on a landscape scale.
	Wet/Cold Conifer: There are no special status species associated with the Wet/Cold Conifer cover type.	Wet/Cold Conifer: Same as Alternative A.	Wet/Cold Conifer: Same as Alternative A.	Wet/Cold Conifer: Same as Alternative A.
	Riparian: It is not anticipated that areas supporting special status plants would be treated, unless site-specific information indicates that small-scale RxFire use would maintain a seral stage beneficial to the taxa.	Riparian: No treatment proposed. Unlikely to impact any special status plant populations.	Riparian: Same as Alternative A.	Riparian: Same as Alternative B.
	Vegetated Rock/Lava: No treatment proposed. Unlikely to impact any	Vegetated Rock/Lava: Same as Alternative A.	Vegetated Rock/Lava: Same as Alternative A.	Vegetated Rock/Lava: Same as Alternative A.

TABLE 2-7. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE EFFECTS (CONTINUED)

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
	special status plant populations.			
Air Quality	**Emissions (tons/10-years):** **- PM_{10}** ..... 1,463 **- $PM_{2.5}$** 1,233	**Emissions (tons/10-years):** **- PM_{10}** ..... 20,235 **- $PM_{2.5}$** 17,024	**Emissions (tons/10-years):** **- PM_{10}** ..... 26,172 **- $PM_{2.5}$** 21,797	**Emissions (tons/10-years):** **- PM_{10}** ..... 9,052 **- $PM_{2.5}$** 7,468
Soil Resources	Least amount of water and wind erodible soils disturbance (**40,724 and 169,935 acres**, respectively).	Would disturb **109,019 acres** of water erodible soils and **397,415 acres** of wind erodible soils.	Most amount of water and wind erodible soils disturbance, **323,058 and 1,060,027 acres**, respectively.	Would impact **245,051 acres** of water erodible soils and **969,389 acres** of wind erodible soils.
Water Resources	Less than **1%** of the proposed treatments in all cover types would occur on water-erodible soils. Thus, overall, short-term impacts to water resources would be negligible across the District.	Approximately **6%** of the proposed treatments for all cover types would occur on wind-erodible soils, while less than **2%** would occur on water-erodible soils, with concomitant risk of sedimentation and short-term impacts to water quality in the District.	Approximately **17%** of the proposed treatments for all cover types would occur on wind-erodible soils, while approximately **6%** would occur on water-erodible soils, resulting in concomitant risk of sedimentation and short-term impacts to water quality in the District.	Approximately **19%** of the proposed treatments for all cover types would occur on wind-erodible soils, while approximately **5%** would occur on water-erodible soils, resulting in concomitant risk of sedimentation and short-term impacts to water quality in the District.
Livestock Grazing Management	Would result in approximately **4,750 AUMs** (0.7%) being temporarily unavailable annually.	Would result in approximately **12,278 AUMs** (1.8%) being temporarily unavailable annually.	Would result in approximately **32,047 AUMs** (4.8%) being temporarily unavailable annually.	Would result in approximately **28,927 AUMs** (4.3%) being temporarily unavailable annually.
Recreation	Could have direct impacts by decreasing public access to recreational areas during treatment and recovery periods.	Would have short-term direct impacts by decreasing access to more recreational areas during treatment and recovery periods than Alternative A.	Would have short-term direct impacts by decreasing access to more recreational areas during treatment and recovery periods more than for any of the other alternatives. Dispersed	Would have short-term direct impacts by decreasing access to recreational areas during treatment and recovery periods at levels close to Alternative C. Dispersed recreation, such

TABLE 2-7. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE EFFECTS (CONTINUED)

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
			recreation, such as hunting and all-terrain vehicle riding, could be adversely affected in the short term through decreased access to treated areas.	as hunting and all-terrain vehicle riding, could be adversely affected in the short term through decreased access to treated areas.
Wilderness	Treatments in Wilderness Study Areas that follow the guidance in BLM handbook H-8551 (Interim Policy for Lands Under Wilderness Review) would not impair wilderness values under any alternative.			
	Effects of current direction's full wildland fire suppression would not result in any short-term, discernible change from current conditions.	Treatments in Vegetated Rock/Lava (approximately 50% of the Wilderness Study Areas) would only include WFU. The remaining cover types that are within Wilderness Study Areas would receive, in general, approximately **2.6 times** more treatment than under Alternative A. Treatment impacts may be perceived to decrease the wilderness values of these Wilderness Study Areas in the short term.	Anticipated treatment impacts would be similar to those under Alternative B for Vegetated Rock/Lava cover types. The remaining cover types that are within Wilderness Study Areas would, in general, be **6.7 times** more likely to receive treatment than under Alternative A.	There are no treatments proposed in Vegetated Rock/Lava. The remaining cover types that are within Wilderness Study Areas would, in general, be **6.1 times** more likely to receive treatment than under Alternative A.
Visual Resources	Views from key viewpoints would be maintained in FRCC 3 with the exception of some portions of the Ohio Gulch viewshed that would be FRCC 2. This would result in moderate-to-high visual quality degradation from atmospheric particulates and large-scale landscape scorching as	Views from key viewpoints would be maintained in FRCC 3 with the exception of Appendicitis Hill Wilderness Study Area viewshed, where vegetation could move to FRCC 2, resulting in lessened potential for visual quality degradation.	Views from key viewpoints would be maintained in FRCC 1 with the exception of some portions of the Appendicitis Hill Wilderness Study Area, which would remain in FRCC 2. This would result in substantially reduced potential for major visual quality degradation from atmospheric	Views from key viewpoints would be maintained in FRCC 3, 2, and 1 with similar visual impacts to those described for Alternative B.

TABLE 2-7. SUMMARY OF ALTERNATIVE EFFECTS (CONTINUED)

	Alternative A	Alternative B	Alternative C	Alternative D
	seen from these viewpoints.		particulates and large-scale landscape scorching as seen from these viewpoints.	
Cultural Resources and Native American Tribal Concerns	An estimated **250,200 footprint-acres** would be subject to mechanical treatment, chemical treatment, RxFire, or seeding over a 10-year period. However, standard BLM practice entails measures such as pre-action inventory and avoidance that would likely mitigate these impacts.	An estimated **646,200 footprint-acres** in most cover types would be treated over a 10-year period. However, standard BLM practice entails measures such as pre-action inventory and avoidance that would likely mitigate these impacts.	An estimated **1,686,600 footprint-acres** would be treated over a 10-year period, resulting in a corresponding increase in risk to cultural resources or Tribal concerns. However, standard BLM practice entails measures such as pre-action inventory and avoidance that would likely mitigate these impacts.	An estimated **1,522,400 footprint-acres** would be treated over a 10-year period. Impacts would be similar to those described for Alternative C.
Socioeconomics	-The loss of revenue to the BLM in the form of grazing fees would be **$65,075** over the next 10-year period. -Total fire management costs over the next 10-years would be approximately **$133 million,** of which approximately **$46 million** would be funneled into the local economy.	-The loss of revenue to the BLM in the form of grazing fees would be **$168,213** over the next 10-year period. -Total fire management costs over the next 10-years would be approximately **$114 million**, of which approximately **$40 million** would be funneled into the local economy.	-The loss of revenue to the BLM in the form of grazing fees would be **$439,040** over the next 10-year period. -Total fire management costs over the next 10 years would be approximately **$199 million**, of which approximately **$70 million** would be funneled into the local economy.	-The loss of revenue to the BLM in the form of grazing fees would be **$396,297** over the next 10-year period. -Total fire management costs over the next 10 years would be approximately **$184 million**, of which approximately **$64 million** would be funneled into the local economy.